Daily Report

Near East & South Asia

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Inter-Arab Affairs

Inter-Arab: Arab League Chief Views Israeli Attacks, Summit Prospects

NC2404181796 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1700 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 24 Apr (MENA)—The Arab League has once again condemned the continued Israeli military attacks on Lebanon, displacing more than 600,000 Lebanese citizens from southern Lebanon to Beirut.

In remarks to MENA, Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid has described the situation in Lebanon as difficult, adding that the Israeli show of force on the Lebanese territories is unacceptable and that problems cannot be solved militarily. He referred in this regard to the Israeli incursion of Lebanon in 1982. Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid expressed his belief that Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres will not benefit from these repeated attacks on Lebanon that have left hundreds of innocent people dead or wounded.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid stressed that Israel must realize that the Arab nation is living up to its responsibility, is solid, and steadfast in its just stance in defending its rights and territories. He noted that Israel is the aggressor. He described the recent resolution issued by the Arab foreign ministers as a hundred percent correct, noting that Israel must speed up a cease-fire and implement Resolution 425, which calls for the full Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon.

Asked about his contacts to hold a mini Arab summit, Dr. 'Abd-al- Majid pointed out that he had sent a message to Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali asking him to call an Arab summit to discuss the continuing Israeli attacks on Lebanon, examine inter-Arab relations, and adopt a unified stance vis-a-vis the Israeli escalation. He pointed out that an Arab summit needs time and good preparation to bear fruit. He added that there is a need to accelerate the convening of an Arab summit both at the official and popular levels, as demonstrated by the calls for an Arab summit by the Arab Women's Union, Egyptian parties, and the Egyptian Solidarity Committee, which proves the Arab consensus.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid warned that Israel's continued aggression against Lebanon jeopardizes the Middle East Peace process and makes it insubstantial. He affirmed that peace is an Arab strategic option and that Israel must respect it as well as all the agreements it signed since the Madrid conference. He called on Israel to implement the resolutions of international legality and withdraw from the occupied Arab territories in accordance with Resolution 242, 425, and the land for peace principle.

Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Chairs Executive Committee Meeting on Charter

JN2404130396 Gaza Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation Television Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 24 Apr 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat today chaired a meeting of the PLO Executive Committee. Topics listed on the agenda of the Palestine National Council were reviewed, especially those concerning the amendment of the Charter in line with the important historic phase experienced by our people. [Video shows 'Arafat's motorcade arriving at the meeting venue]

Palestinian Affairs: National Charter Amendment To Be Voted on 'This Evening'

JN2404141596 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1300 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Ahmad Quray', also known as Abu-'Ala', speaker of the Palestinian Legislative Council, asserted that voting on the amendment of the National Charter articles will be conducted at the Palestine National Council [PNC] session due to be held this evening. He indicated that 557 PNC members are taking part in the PNC meetings.

Meanwhile, the committees formed by the PNC have continued their meetings at the Rashad al-Shawwa Center in Gaza City. The committees include: The Legal, Political, Refugees, Jerusalem, and Home Reconstruction Committees.

Palestinian Affairs: Executive Committee Adopts 'Formula' for Charter Amendment

JN2404141896 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1300 GMT 24 Apr 96

[Report by 'Adil al-Za'nun in Gaza]

[FBIS Translated Text] The special Palestine National Council [PNC] session which will be devoted to a debate on the amendment of the National Charter will begin at the al-Shawwa Cultural Center in Gaza at 1800 today. The PLO Executive Committee met under President Yasir 'Arafat at the Presidency in Gaza. This meeting was concluded this afternoon.

PLO Executive Committee member Mahmud 'Abbas said that the Executive Committee adopted a formula

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for the National Charter submitted by the PNC Legal Committee at this meeting. 'Abbas asserted that the formula approved by the Executive Committee will be submitted to the PNC at its special session this evening. This formula will also be voted on at this session, 'Abbas noted.

PLO Executive Committee member Sulayman al-Najjab asserted that the Independence Declaration is crucially important to the Palestinian people. He noted that 15 members attended the committee meeting.

The Legal Committee formed by the PNC reviewed the changes and amendments introduced into the charter so far. Committee member Furayh Abu-Middayn said that scores of amendments have been introduced into the National Charter. He added that the Legal Committee drafted a recommendation, the contents of which he declined to reveal. This recommendation will be referred to the PNC at its session this evening. Abu-Middayn noted that there are several ideas regarding the amendment of the National Charter. These ideas will be reviewed during the special PNC session.

Palestinian Affa'rs: PNC Amends National Charter 24 Apr

JN2404193596 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1804 GMT 24 Apr 96

[Report by 'Adil al-Za'nun and Mu'in Shadid in Gaza—live]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Palestine National Council [PNC] adopted by a majority vote a decision to amend the Palestinian National Charter in a manner that will be in line with the important and sensitive stage of the Palestinian cause. We now go to Gaza where colleague 'Adil al-Za'nun is on the line.

[Al-Za'nun] Good evening, Yusuf [al-Qazzaz]. The Palestine National Council, PNC, adopted by a majority vote the draft bill on amending the National Charter that was submitted to its special and urgent session held in al-Shawwa Cultural Center in Gaza. The session ended a short while ago.

PNC Secretary Muhammad Subayh told Voice of Palestine that the draft bill the PLO Executive Committee submitted to the PNC was adopted by 504 votes for, 54 against, and 14 abstentions. Subayh told our radio that the draft bill is in line with the current stage and responds to our people's needs in accordance with the UN resolutions on the Palestinian cause.

Following the meeting, PLO Executive Committee Member Mahmud 'Abbas said that this step is very important and will pave the way for the Israelis to abide by all the agreements that were signed between the Palestinian and Israeli sides.

Brother Yusuf, the following is the text of the draft bill amending the National Charter which colleague Mu'in Shadid will read to you.

[Shadid] Yusuf, good evening.

[Al-Qazzaz] Good evening, Mu'in.

[Shadid] The PNC, convening its 21st session in Gaza proceeds from the Independence Declaration document and the political statement that was adopted in the 19th session which convened in Algeria on 15 November 1988. These stipulate the adoption of a solution where two states will be established and emphasize the principle of the settlement of disputes through peaceful means.

The preamble of the Declaration of Principles signed in Washington on [word indistinct] September 1993 states that the two sides agree that the time has come to end decades of confrontations and conflicts, to recognize their reciprocal legitimate political rights and the means for peaceful coexistence with dignity and mutual security, and to achieve a just, lasting, and comprehensive peaceful settlement and a historic reconciliation through the political operation that was agreed upon.

Stemming from international legitimacy, represented by the UN resolutions on the Palestine question, including those related to the settlements, Jerusalem, refugees, and other final phase issues, as well as the implementation of Resolutions 242 and 338; emphasizing the PLO's commitments stipulated in the Declaration of Principles—Oslo 1—and in the agreement signed in Cairo, as well as in the messages of mutual recognition signed on 9 and 10 September 1993, in the phased Israeli-Palestinian agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip—Oslo 2 which was signed in Washington on 28 September 1995—and in the decision of the PLO Central Council issued in October 1993, which approved the Oslo agreement and all its appendixes; stemming from the principles on whose basis the Madrid peace conference and the Washington negotiations were convened; the PNC decides:

1. To amend the National Charter by canceling the articles that conflict with the messages exchanged between the PLO and the Government of Israel on 9 and 10 September 1993.

2. The PNC will entrust the Legal Committee with redrafting the National Charter and submitting it to the Central Council at its first meeting.

At this time, journalists are allowed to enter into the meeting hall. During the session, only the team of the

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Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation was permitted to attend. President Yasir 'Arafat delivered a speech during this session. He called on the PNC members to assume their responsibilities and approve the amendment of the charter, especially since there is Israeli procrastination to evade commitment to the agreements.

As Brother 'Adil [al-Za'nun] said, Mahmud 'Abbas, also known as Abu-Mazin, is now holding a news conference a few moments after he left the hall in the wake of approving this decision. Addressing the PNC, he said: This step is very important because we are fulfilling a commitment required of us and because we want to open the road to the Israelis, so they can fulfill their commitments to achieve a comprehensive and just peace in the Middle East.

Mahmud 'Abbas also called on the Israeli Government and the Labor Party to reconsider the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with holy Jerusalem as its capital.

Palestinian Affairs: Officials Cited on Amendment of National Charter

JN2404203696 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1800 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Palestine National Council's [PNC] Political Committee has embarked on the formulation of a political program that meets the requirements of the coming phase in light of Palestinian, Arab, and international developments and in a manner that reinforces national unity on the path of establishing an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as capital.

In a speech at the PNC session, al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim, PNC and Legislative Council member, said that amending the National Charter is a national need and a fulfillment of the PLO's commitments. 'Abd- al-Rahim added that it is important to draft a political program that takes into consideration the constants of the final status negotiations on Jerusalem, settlements, refugees, displaced persons, borders, and sovereignty. Al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim called on all the Palestinian trends and political forces to work from within the one Palestinian family to achieve the national goal rather than to work to achieve other objectives.

'Abd-al-Rahim asserted that the National Authority functions on the basis of political pluralism where the minority abides by the majority's opinion and decisions to serve higher national interests.

Dr. Samir Ghawshah, secretary general of the Palestinian Popular Struggle Front and member of the Executive Committee, delivered a speech at the PNC today. He said that the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority on the soil of the homeland is a prominent event and a new springboard toward the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital. This crowns the Palestinian people's struggle and sacrifices since the inception of the contemporary Palestinian revolution.

On the amendment of the Charter, Dr. Ghawshah said: Amending the Charter should not encroach on the Palestinian goals which will not change, no matter how shapes and forms change.

Palestinian Affairs: Radio Reports 'Positive Reactions' to Charter Amendment

JN2504065996 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0500 GMT 25 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat received a telephone call from U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher to discuss the positive repercussions of the decision adopted by the Palestine National Council [PNC] to amend the Palestinian National Charter in a manner that will be in line with the requirements of the current stage.

The PNC decision, which was adopted by a majority of 504 votes, drew more positive reactions. U.S. President Bill Clinton praised the decision, noting that it will have a positive effect on the peace process. Meanwhile, [acting] U.S. State Department Spokesman Glyn Davies said Washington believes that this development, represented by amending the National Charter, will give momentum to the peace process on the Palestinian-Israeli track.

Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres said the PNC decision to amend the National Charter will largely change the course of Palestinian-Israeli relations, and described the decision as a historic step. Likud leader Binyamin Netanyahu considered the decision as a positive step.

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Says National Charter Amendment 'Shameful Retreat'

JN2504093496 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 0900 GMT 25 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, today said that the abrogation of the articles of the Palestinian National Charter which do not recognize Israel's existence and which call for armed struggle to liberate Palestine is a shameful retreat. Hamas pledged to continue the fight against Zionism.

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Palestinian Affairs: Intelligence Chief Insists Assassination Plotter in Jordan

MM2504093896 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 25 Apr 96 p 5

[Report by Salih Qallab in Amman: "Palestinian Intelligence Chief Tells AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT: Planner of Assassination Attempt on 'Arafat Is in Jordan With Forged Passport"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Despite denials from Jordan and Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], Major General Amin al-Hindi, director of Palestinian General Intelligence, has confirmed to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that Ziyad al-Qishawi, the leader of the group which has admitted conspiring to assassinate Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat on the coming blessed 'Id al-Idha day, is currently somewhere in one of the Jordanian cities.

Maj. Gen. al-Hindi added that this does not mean that we closely or remotely accuse the Jordanian authorities, but the Palestinian security organs' information indicates that Ziyad al-Qishawi, who fled to Jordan after the assassination plot was discovered, is living under an assumed identity and carries a forged Jordanian passport under an assumed name.

Al-Hindi said that Palestinian Intelligence will soon send a senior official to pass on al-Qishawi's file and all the information concerning the case to the relevant security quarters in Jordan.

Al-Hindi denied that there is any misunderstanding between the Palestinian and Jordanian organs, saying that we and Jordan are in the same boat and must make every effort to protect this boat's security and ward off any threats to it.

With regard to the assassination attempt itself, al-Hindi said that reports concerning it are not rumors. Three Hamas members have been detained by the Palestinian security organs and have made astonishing confessions and given evidence that their leadership abroad had assigned them the task of assassinating 'Arafat on the next blessed 'Id al-Idha day, during his morning visit to the martyrs' cemetery in Gaza.

The director of Palestinian Intelligence said that the three detainees will hold a press conference after the end of the Palestine National Council and after the blessed 'Id al-Idha, to tell the press and the media what they have told the Palestinian security organs during the investigations.

Al-Hindi said that some details will soon be revealed, in due course, when the follow-up and investigation end and the information has been passed on to the brotherly states concerned, as required by cooperation in this context.

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Algeria

Algeria: Review of Constitution May Be on Agenda of Consultations

LD2404202196 Algiers EL WATAN in French 11 Apr 96 p 3

[FBIS Translated Text] Within the framework of the national dialogue that is under way, President Liamine Zeroual has continued his consultations with a number of national figures. Yesterday, it was the turn of Hadj Lakhdar Abid, former commander of the first military region; Mohammed Bouchaib, member of the [National Liberation Front] 22-member committee; Youcef Khatib, former commander of the fourth military region; and Salah Boubnider, to be the guests of the president of the republic.

A new revelation was made yesterday by Mr. Bouchaib: Review of the constitution seems to be on the agenda of the next phase of the consultations.

The idea was suggested a long time ago, but it was never followed up seriously.

The debate has, however, focused on two points. On the one hand, the need to know what should be done and how it is going to be fit into the constitution. On the other hand, should only certain provisions of the constitution be changed or should a deep and comprehensive review of the constitution be embarked upon? The president of the republic, who was legally elected, is the only person who has a mandate to put the question to the Algerian people in a referendum. But he should, nonetheless, continue to consult with his guests on this matter if the question is still on the agenda of his consultations.

Observers, however, believe there are at least three provisions that seem to be out of date in the new political context facing the country today. On the one hand, there is a need — which is widely recognized by the majority of the political class — to find a balance between the various powers by clipping the excessive powers of the president of the republic by transferring a number of these powers to the government to allow it to exercise fully its executive powers. On the other hand, there is also a need to reconsider Article 40 of the Constitution on political pluralism, which might undergo some kind of a face-lift.

One should, however, expect that further vigilance is going to be taken when this article is rewritten to avoid in future the political maneuvers that the country has suffered from for lack of clarity of legal texts that gave way to free interpretations and deviations.

The review of the bill on parties that figures on the agenda of the dialogue should draw up the new rules of the game before trying to control their future activities.

However, despite the fact that everyone seems to know the terms of the dialogue, one thing remains uncertain: How to resolve the dilemma of Islamist parties, which although unconstitutional are not illegal and are currently taking part in the dialogue? It is, however, difficult to see the authorities renouncing a party like HAMAS [Islamic Society Movement] and excluding it from the political game, because it is unconstitutional or to please the rest of democratic parties. Anyhow, the HAMAS movement's decision to fight the recent presidential elections has given these elections a pluralist character.

Despite the fact that the president has to recognize the rights of legal and active Islamist parties, he should, however, consider together with the political class, which shares republican values, the legal safeguards that should be drawn up to make sure religion will not be used for political ends, as in the past.

"The Platform of the National Consensus" which was issued following the holding of "The National Conference" in January 1994, did, however, find a compromise between the political positions of the various political movements. A just compromise was indeed found; it was the pledge in the Platform of the National Consensus to bar political parties from using religion for partisan ends, but not as it was before for political ends, which is different.

However, other changes could also be introduced to the constitution, like those that bring about constitutional mechanisms that will face up to exceptional situations like those which faced the country in the wake of the resignation of President Chadli [Bendjedid] which came in the steps of the dissolution of the National Assembly. These two events have thrown us into the current acute crisis, a way out of which the country is still looking.

Algeria: Security Forces Kill 26 Armed Men Last Week

LD2404112596 Paris Radio France International in French 0630 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] According to the daily newspaper, LE SOIR D'ALGERIE, an armed group of six men has reportedly been killed last Friday [19 April] in Constantine. Last week around 20 armed Islamists were killed by the security forces in Algiers.

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Algeria: Criminal Court Sentences 4 People in Absentia to Death

LD2404235496 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 2200 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Medea's criminal court today sentenced four people to death in absentia on charges of forming an armed group aiming at killing, arson, larceny, murder, conspiring against the state's security, spreading fear among inhabitants, and endangering their lives.

Egypt

Egypt: Mubarak Delivers Labor Day Speech

NC2404104896 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 0858 GMT 24 Apr 96

[Speech by Egyptian President Muhammad Husni Mubarak marking Labor Day at the Conference Hall in Madinat al-Nasr, Cairo—live]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the name of God, the merciful and compassionate, brothers and sisters: Before I begin my speech I would ask you to stand up in mourning for the four policemen who were martyred two days ago.

Brothers and sons, faithful workers of Egypt, soldiers of development, guards of progress, makers of the present and future, and protectors of Egypt's revival and dignity: Good circumstances find us celebrating Labor Day on 25 April [as heard and throughout speech], the anniversary of the liberation of Sinai. On this immortal day Egypt's flags rose in Sinai, a symbol of the sacrifices of great people who were determined to liberate all their national soil and of the sacrifices of brave soldiers, who, determined to regain land and dignity, fought the greatest and most honorable battles so that Egypt's head would remain high. By the sacrifices of its martyrs and the struggle of its people, Egypt regained a dear part of the homeland that unjust fate had willed would remain occupied for years.

The great achievements of 25 April 1982 were the fruit of the struggle of courageous people who always defended their land against all invaders and coveters of land and made the greatest sacrifices for every inch of their national soil. The Egyptian people viewed their land as a symbol of honor and dignity because there can be no life or dignity except in a country with its head held high, a country that is master of its own decision, a country that extends its sovereignty throughout its holy land.

The Egyptian people backed their armed forces, confident of their ability to liberate their land and defend their honor. The campaigns of intimidation and attempts to sow despair did not shake the Egyptian people's resolve, nor did the great burdens of the battle of honor. When the great crossing of the Suez Canal took place the Egyptian people and the Armed Forces were united in making immortal sacrifices throughout Egypt. These sacrifices reached their height at the eastern shore of the Suez Canal, where the men of Egypt hoisted Egypt's victorious flags over Sinai.

You were a primary part of this great victory, which astonished the world and made every Egyptian proud. The homeland will not forget your great contribution to make this glorious day a fact, a reality, after being a precious hope in every Egyptian's heart for years. Your Armed Forces will not forget the courageous help given by Egypt's workers working in companies that made heavy sacrifices while building the fortified bases all along the frontline and deep in the valley in the most difficult and dangerous conditions. They devoted much of their efforts to the military effort. The homeland will not forget its worker, engineer, and technician, martyrs who fought the battle alongside the Armed Forces to bring Egypt this glorious victory. This day, 25 April, will remain a day of Egyptian patriotism that symbolizes the Egyptian people's ability to make sacrifices and embodies its united national consensus on the objective of liberating the land regardless of the burdens or sacrifices. This day, 25 April, will remain a day of sacrifice and the symbol of our Armed Forces' determination to retrieve the land and dignity.

The Sinai liberation process began with the war of attrition, peaked in the glorious October, and completed its final chapters in an epic of political struggle that exploited the military victory to consolidate the bases of justice and peace in the Middle East. This unique process and its glorious chapters and completed stages revealed the depth of Egypt's commitment to defend every inch of its national soil.

The Sinai liberation process laid down the right bases for a just and lasting peace that overcomes the residue of past animosity and hate. It laid down the firm bases for peaceful coexistence, mutual security, and fruitful cooperation. This glorious epic gave irrefutable evidence that the just peace is the right line of defense that ensures the peace forces' victory over their arrogant enemies who are dismayed to see the will to live and calls for goodwill triumph.

It was splendid to see so many world leaders meeting in the Egyptian city of Sharm al-Shaykh deep in Sinai in support of the peace process against the numerous dangers threatening it. It was splendid to see this large gathering — representing the whole world — taking place in response to an Egyptian call to highlight the international community's commitment to peace

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as a sublime objective and a noble aim. The summit decided that the peace efforts should continue until it achieves its final objectives regardless of the obstacles and impediments.

The conferees condemned all forms of violence and terrorism and called for strengthening the mutual security of all the parties. They also stressed the importance of the commitment to implement the agreements signed by the parties in letter and spirit. The whole world's commitment to support the peace process at this critical stage, its firm determination to ensure the success of the historic reconciliation between the Palestinians and Israelis, and its clear insistence on the need to resume the negotiations on every track remain the essence and principal content of the summit.

We are confident that a comprehensive peace is inevitable, regardless of the obstacles, and that justice will triumph in the end over oppression and hegemony, because right is protected by the determination of those who have it. No one can stop the cycle of peace now that it has taken this great stride. No one can restrict the future with the shackles of the past in an age when the calls for freedom and human rights are growing. No one can falsify the peoples' right choice of a just and equitable peace that achieves a balance in the interests of all the parties.

I do not need to affirm that we will remain firmly committed to a just peace established on this sound basis: comprehensive peace in return for full withdrawal. I want to note here that some of the practices we saw in the past few weeks are incompatible with the spirit of peace and do not rise to the level of the expectations of the peoples looking toward a new chapter in the region's history that is based on the real desire for peaceful coexistence and reconciliation and established on mutual respect, regard for the feelings of others, and denunciation of the concepts of hegemony. But this behavior should not shake our belief in peace and affect our determination to work strenuously to achieve it, because peace is a firm strategic objective that is not affected by changes in transient policies and the error of tactical practices. These hardships and changes delay the attainment of the sublime objective that we pledged to achieve and cost everyone precious time that should not be wasted.

The bloody events in fraternal Lebanon throughout the past few days are a blatant example of violations that are completely inconsistent with the spirit of peace and recall to mind the atmosphere of war, destruction, and bloodshed. No matter what is said to justify this war launched by Israel against the Lebanese people in many towns and areas, the fact remains that this large-scale aggression — which has claimed the lives of many civilians, women and children — is a sin that cannot be justified or tolerated in any way whatsoever, and a deviation from the rules of behavior that all must abide by in the stage of peacemaking, regardless of the temptations or motives. [applause and slogans]

The Egyptian people and government have taken a stand against the new Israeli invasion of a fraternal Arab country. Egypt called on the countries that shoulder special responsibility toward sponsoring peace and all peaceloving forces to express their rejection of these Israeli practices that have gone beyond every limit. Egypt undertook an active role to confront these Israeli practices within the framework of the Arab League and the Security Council. At the same time, it acted to convince the Israeli Government that this policy is erroneous, and warned of this policy's grave consequences, and the great harm it is posing for the future of coexistence between the Arabs and Israel.

I would like to repeat to the fraternal Lebanese people that we stand by them in their latest ordeal and back their efforts to safeguard their sovereignty and defend their interests [applause]. We trust this creative people's ability to overcome this tragedy with the same firmness with which they confronted destructive disasters in the near past. They are noble and capable people who proved their worth and originality under any circumstances, maintained their dignity, and faced ordeals and hardships with heads held high.

Brothers and sisters, Egypt's faithful workers, Labor Day this year coincides with the anniversary of the liberation of Sinai. Auspicious circumstances combine the two anniversaries. The great and creative human effort has changed life in Sinai and turned it into one of the most important centers of construction and comprehensive development in Egypt. Previously, Sinai was a theater of continual wars that lasted half a century. Had it not been for peace, this comprehensive construction and development in Sinai would not have been achieved. This is part of a national plan costing 75 billion Egyptian pounds. Under this plan the Nile River water will be supplied to the peninsula to irrigate its plains and valleys and increase cultivated land by 750,000 feddans. This project will change the face of life in Sinai. Under this plan cities will be built along Sinai's coasts, attracting tourists from all over the world. The plan also involves prospecting for Sinai's untapped mineral and oil resources. Peace has opened Sinai's closed doors so that the hands of Egypt's decent sons, Egypt's faithful workers, soldiers of development, and battalions of construction and prosperity, will enter to construct buildings that will be a source of pride in national action.

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Greetings to every working man who will contribute to these great achievements and construction throughout Sinai. Greetings to the splendid efforts of the workers in their achievements over every inch of this dear part of the homeland, where huge development projects are under way. These projects represent a balance of major plans that will turn Sinai into an arena of fruitful work and prosperous production.

Work is under way to achieve this huge development program, which requires massive expenditure to establish the infrastructure on the basis of which this enormous development can take place throughout Sinai. Dear brothers and sisters, we owe this formidable achievement to our great people who supported peace and remained confident. They proceeded along the difficult road of peace while remaining certain that they could achieve a just peace that realizes the interests of all the people in the region. Peace enabled Egypt to set the perpetual objective of development at the top of its list of priorities and implement three successive development plans that addressed the numerous deficiencies resulting from problems accumulated over more than 50 years without a solution or radical treatment. The facilities got worn out, the infrastructure virtually collapsed, machines in factories broke down, the Treasury nearly went bankrupt, and economic problems increased until things nearly reached a deadend. Peace, brothers and sisters, enabled Egypt to start the economic reform march that rectified the chronic imbalance in its economic structure, restored confidence in the national economy, and placed Egypt in its correct place at the top of the investment and production centers in the Middle East. Peace enabled Egypt to aspire to a correct and entrenched democracy that has stood fast in the face of turbulent storms and winds. It gave Egyptian society the chance to establish party pluralism, a free press, and a new political system based on the state of the institutions and elevated the sovereignty of the law. Most people supported the peace objective. The faithful workers of Egypt were among the vanguard of those who tended toward peace. Because of their historic alertness, they realized that peace opens Egypt's doors to a new future. Our choice of peace stems from our deep conviction in the rights of this homeland to democracy, security, and development, and its ability to safeguard the march and preserve its objectives until a comprehensive peace is realized—a peace that realizes the interests of all the parties and safeguards the homeland's security and safety. I will remain one of Egypt's soldiers, men who have devoted their life to defending this homeland and who have sworn to serve it. I am not afraid of war and its terrors because I have lived the life of a fighter who is devoted to his role. But, ultimately, war is death and destruction, mutual attrition, and the squandering of life, resources, and potential. War, if it takes place, should defend land and dignity. If it does not, it goes against the nature of things.

The Egyptian people's achievements along the road to peace and progress have been a source of hatred and grudges for the forces of evil and loss. These forces tried to direct their destructive conspiracies against Egypt to abort its march and hamper its progress. But our great people realized from the start the objectives of this evil clique that aspires to deal their successes a blow, threaten their livelihood, and destroy the chances for their future. Our people adopted a united stand to condemn this clique's crimes and demand a just punishment for the murderers, the enemies of life who are terrorizing society, shedding the blood of innocent people, and shutting the doors before earning an honest living, without considering homeland, religion, or conscience.

The people will not be deceived by these killers, who use religion as a cover. Despite the hypocrites who sought to justify the crimes of these groups, our enlightened people realized from the start, before all the facts became clear, that they are facing hireling groups that work for foreign forces that do not want Egypt to achieve stability or progress. These groups' schemes have begun to fall apart and their goals have been uncovered. The world now knows the magnitude and dimensions of the conspiracy. Most of these groups' organizations have collapsed and most of their members and commands have fallen. Many of the organizational formations within Egypt and their wings abroad have been uncovered. The role of the hypocrites, those who encourage them, and those who benefit from this plot has also been uncovered. What we are seeing are desperate attempts by the remnants of these groups to resume their activities and strike at the interests of the toilers of the brave sons of this people.

I greet Egypt's workers, who form the vanguard of the popular confrontation of the danger of terrorism, demanding that it be uprooted. They safeguarded their trade unions from attempts at penetration by the supporters of these groups. [applause] They thus provided the most magnificent example of consciousness and patriotism. [applause] Perhaps it is appropriate here to express my full pride in Egypt's workers, who have held fast to Egyptian patriotism and drawn the line that guarantees the unity and patriotism of the trade unions free from the maneuvering of partisan life. They thus warded off the dangers of disunity and division from their unions and proved that trade union action within the ranks of the workers is mature and democratic. [applause]

I was happy about the positive and constructive dialogue held in the past few weeks between the workers

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and government on the future of the public business companies. It was clear that the basis of the dialogue was primarily the common interest. The goal of the dialogue was to enable the workers to see the future of the workers in these companies clearly, on the grounds that they are a basic part of the homeland's resources and potential. The dialogue did not stem from rigid and premeditated stances that judge things according to fanatical views without examining the nature of the problem, practical results, and expectations for the future. The dialogue stemmed from the reality that both sides—the workers and government—realize. The workers did not allow themselves to be affected by false rumors nor did they allow the tendentious parties to change the facts. They did not issue verdicts before they knew the reality. They sought a serious and responsible dialogue that resulted in clear facts that will take care of the interests of the workers and companies. This represents the highest degree of awareness and sense of national responsibility.

We must dig the road to progress with our own hands. We must be self-reliant because the homeland is built only by the hands and brains of its sons and is protected only by the ability to compete through abundant productivity and high quality. We ought to benefit from the experiences of other nations but without making their mistakes. We must understand the uniqueness of our reality because each people has its own conditions and experiences. There is no readymade formula for progress that nations can apply without regard to their conditions and situations. But there are lessons that are useful for everybody.

Egypt is a developing country with limited resources, is densely populated, and is waging the battle for all-out change so as to catch up with progress, relying on itself in a difficult age governed by the blocs of big countries and their fierce competition for markets.

Egypt's economic reform process succeeded because it took into account the conditions of our society. It adopted the principle of gradualism. There would have been ruin and chaos would have threatened a setback for the reform process and heralded suffering had we done what others did and given free rein to everything, bringing down all the existing establishments before setting up the right replacements.

We have safely completed the major part of the economic reform process despite its huge difficulties, because we took into account the uniqueness of the Egyptian experience and avoided the mistakes of others. We continue to insist on the need to maintain the cohesion of our domestic front and to strengthen legitimate political action against the plotting of the enemies of democracy and on the need for discipline to protect development. There was nothing in these controls that could impede the democracy of political action or freedom of opinion. On the contrary, the aim was to protect the process from its enemies, because democracy is not a dream in a vacuum, but a responsible framework for mass political action based on party pluralism that protects the controls of legitimacy and law.

We respect the right to differ and regard freedom of opinion as sacred. But we reject the calls of tendentious people based on deception and distortion of facts to serve the interests of others.

We respect press freedom and regard it as the safety valve that protects society's progress. But we want the word to be free and responsible. We want it to respect the truth and not infringe the rights of others.

We hold party action in esteem and appreciate the opposition's role. But we refuse to let party action be hollow maneuvering or a slogan for suspicious alliances with illegal forces the objectives of which everyone knows.

We seek only God's pleasure and to preserve the homeland's dignity. There is nothing that can frighten us, nothing that we wish to preserve for our own personal ends, nothing we want to hide. Our record is clean, our heads are held high, and our conscience is clear. We want this homeland to progress and prosper and achieve its aims. To achieve these objectives we are using a responsible democracy that safeguards our social unity and cohesion, a mature freedom that links rights with obligations, and a disciplined mode of conduct that protects the rights and liberties of others.

Egypt's workers have backed the economic reform effort and are responsibly aware that the aim of this reform is to strengthen the homeland's capabilities, improve the efficiency of its production sectors, achieve higher growth rates, and make possible the creation of new jobs for future generations. These objectives require the best possible exploitation of our available resources and expanding the scope of economic development as much as possible by introducing new resources that can fulfill Egypt's wish to tackle broader horizons.

All this requires a bigger role by Egyptian workers and a greater effort on their part to attain these ambitious objectives. The success of these economic development plans and any progress largely depends on the minds and hands that implement these plans, turning them from a dream into a reality. Hence it has been necessary for us to provide our worker brothers and sons with all they need to play this role effectively and spare them doubts and anxieties.

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I have frequently stated that protecting the workers' rights is a major responsibility of any government that primarily seeks to safeguard the working classes' interests. [applause]

But some people are trying to create anxiety in the workers' ranks by disseminating rumors that many workers will be laid off when some business sector companies are privatized, just as happens in Western capitalist countries and other countries that have recently pursued a freemarket policy. You have seen clearly and in a way that leaves no room for doubt that the process of privatization in Egypt is governed by numerous controls. Foremost among these is the maintenance of Egyptian sovereignty over its land and over its decisions [applause], commitment to the public good and to the workers' and owners' rights, and keeping every privatized company in business whether it is wholly or partially privatized. Additionally, the new management is required to keep the company's workers in their jobs. [applause]

We also know of any dangers that could infringe on the independence of the national economy. While welcoming foreign capital, we still make accurate calculations of the issue and study each case on its merits, because there are strategic projects that concern the public interest, the entire people's interests, which should remain part of the public business sector.

Brothers and sisters, we must be fairer in assessing the private sector's role in the current stage and more confident of its national commitment to society's objectives. The image of the exploitative capitalist bleeding his starving workers has become a thing of the past; it can never return under a regime that is on the side of the masses' interests [applause] and in an age where the workers' rights have increased greatly, their organizations' role has been consolidated, in new working conditions that require more balanced relations between workers and businessmen, and in an advanced legislative environment that asserts the balance among the rights and interests of all sectors of society.

We have an Egyptian private sector that thinks with the mentality of the future, not with the spirit of the past. It is building huge projects in its homeland, confident of its security and stability. It takes care of its workers' rights and extends to them social care programs that are more advanced and comprehensive than those extended by the public business sector. We ought to open every door to these businessmen and encourage them to participate in development without imposing ceilings or limits. We ought to give them priority over foreign capital.

We have before us bright examples that give hope and deserve every possible encouragement. We have this huge number of projects in new cities that have succeeded in making their advanced products compete in foreign markets and have produced high quality goods that are a source of pride for every Egyptian.

We have dozens of examples of Egyptian investors who have set up huge tourist projects along the Red Sea coast and in Sinai. These projects have created tens of thousands of jobs for Egypt's promising sons.

We have a huge effort in the advanced agriculture sector undertaken by the private sector on the new land. Modern and advanced agriculture has begun and most of its produce is exported. This shows this sector's ability to stand fast against the competition among many countries.

Increasing the rate of development and expanding it outside the narrow valley so that it can include the entire homeland and create new jobs for Egypt's sons and the coming generation require our encouragement for the private sector and for expanding its scope as much as possible. Society must announce its confidence in it, because it would be difficult to achieve the objectives of the productivity upsurge without a growing role by the private sector in development.

We feel proud and satisfied that the private sector, which in 1981 contributed approximately 20 percent of the volume of investment, currently contributes almost 55 percent of this investment. According to 1994 estimates, the private sector contributed around 17 billion pounds to the new investment. This year the contribution will near or exceed 22.5 billion pounds.

Brothers and sisters, you may recall that last Labor Day I declared there was a need to raise the growth rate to more than double the population growth rate in the fiscal year 1995-1996, and to raise it gradually to approximately 7 percent before the year 2,000 to reach over three times the population growth rate. The current growth rate is no longer sufficient to cope with the burden of progress in view of the still high population growth rate. In successive development plans in the past we achieved an annual growth rate averaging 4.7 percent, because the bulk of our investment expenditure in those years was directed to infrastructure projects—the infrastructure having been run down. But the government is seeking to raise the growth rate this year and in the years to come to the level we desire so that we can make tangible progress in the life of the Egyptian people and cope with the demands of the expected increase in population, which will rise by another 6 million people before the year 2,000. Approximately 3 million youths will enter the workforce during this period. We must prepare productive jobs for them. This is the first time in the history of national action in which three development plans have been implemented successively with-

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out a gap. Peace gave Egypt the opportunity to place the goal of successive development plans at the top of its priorities.

Development in Egypt was obstructed for around 50 years because of the burdens imposed by the four wars Egypt fought in defense of its national security. These wars drained a great deal of our economic and social resources and hindered the progress our great people deserved. We must compensate for what we have lost so that we may bridge the gap that kept us far from progress.

Countries that have less human and historic resources and are not as civilized as Egypt have achieved high rates of development taking them to the ranks of the advanced countries. I believe we are now in a position to achieve this objective. This is why I insisted on increasing the rate of development at the start of 1995. I asked the new government to make this objective its top priority so that every effort can be devoted to ensuring its success and removing all the obstacles impeding it.

We now have all the resources to achieve this objective; it is a duty that cannot be shirked and there can be no slacking in implementing it. We have security and stability that ensure continuity for reconstruction in a climate not threatened by the danger of war and that will not be threatened by the danger of terrorism, God willing. Middle East peace will triumph and will become deeprooted, no matter how many obstacles there are, because peace embodies the will of the region's peoples. The enemies of peace cannot turn the clock back and dash the peoples' hope of a better future.

We have stable economic policies that create an attractive climate for investment. We stabilized the exchange rate at its real value in accordance with market rates, reduced the budget deficit and the rate of inflation, and removed the obstacles facing investment. Egyptians' funds abroad were repatriated and the private sector's leading role in Egypt's economy has become clearer.

We have the infrastructure. We spent over 160 billion pounds on it. Not one investment project would have been set up in this homeland without it.

We have a surplus cashflow. This enabled our national banks to extend all the required credit facilities in Egyptian and foreign currencies.

We have a leading and successful experience in economic reform. Its most difficult phases have passed safely. It dealt with the chronic structural imbalance in Egypt's economy, rearranged the country's priorities in their right order, and provided it with the opportunity for dealing radically with many of its problems. It provided it with the opportunity to make progress by relying on itself.

Above all this we have faithful and efficient workers, capable, as everybody testifies, of absorbing the modern means of production. They are dedicated to work, support every national project, and protect the factories and installations out of a noble conviction that protection of the establishments of national action means protection of the homeland's capabilities and resources and protection of the source of livelihood for millions of workers. [applause]

Since we have all this, then what do we lack in achieving what other countries have achieved. How was progress begun without these resources? What we lack is more discipline and the full and correct understanding of the meaning of rights, duties, responsible freedom, and the need for balancing the interest of the individual and the nation. What we lack is strict commitment to the standards of quality and perfection. We clearly have the ability to achieve this. We are unable to get rid of the remnants of old ideas that are still shackling our course. This is the joint responsibility of the school, the home, the parties, the unions, the education and media establishments, and the cultural and intellectual bodies. We must be honest with ourselves and search for and treat our shortcomings, because such honesty is the shortest route to the right course.

Brothers and sisters, we fully realize that we are waging the battle of development in conditions that make the burden a heavy one, one that only a noble people that accepts the challenge can shoulder. We fully realize that we are waging the battle of development as we stand on the threshold of a new world the walls and barriers of which are falling down, a world that is becoming a single market where only the fittest and the most efficient will survive. No national industry in any country can hide its shortcomings or deficiencies behind the walls of tariff protection. There can be no closing our doors, because the success and continuation of development efforts depends on our ability to double our exports to the outside world and have good quality and well-made commodities that can compete. Importing commodities valued at over $12 billion this year is unreasonable and unacceptable at a time when exports of our nonpetroleum commodities are still in the range of $2.8 billion.

We are not asking for self-sufficiency in every commodity. This is not a realistic or valid economic demand, because there are many commodities we cannot produce to the same quality, at a price that competes with the price of products produced by others who work with an advantage. We are not asking for self-sufficiency in ev-

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ery commodity, but are asking for a reasonable balance between the volume of our exports and imports and that Egypt should have its fair share of world trade. This is our responsibility, not that of others. There is no alternative to achieving a quick annual increase in exports of no less than $1 billion a year so as to ensure the success of development efforts. This is a humble figure that is easy to achieve if we maintain quality and implement agreements on the dates specified.

The government has removed many restrictions or hurdles in the way of export. The government has facilitated procedures, reduced fees, and eased the establishment of new projects; in the past four months the government approved projects worth around 4 billion Egyptian pounds, most notably in the governorates of Upper Egypt. The government also gave instructions to Egyptian Embassies worldwide to help Egyptian products reach markets abroad. But this depends on our producing good commodities able to compete and move in foreign markets. [applause]

We are proceeding on the right path and there are encouraging signs regarding pioneering Egyptian efforts. Egyptian products have reached the richest markets, where they have even been found to be superior to other, similar products. But we are still at the beginning of a long road and need to make more progress so that export becomes the preoccupation of every Egyptian. We must pay close attention to industry, because it is the cornerstone of continuous development. The growth rate of the national economy hinges on success in this vital sector. Industry can increase the export of our commodities to foreign markets. Industry can create huge job opportunities that can assimilate the bulk of the annual increase in workers in the market. Industry can also achieve a great surplus that will increase the continuing growth of the national economy through the additional revenue.

Since we now need to provide new job opportunities, 0.5 million next year and increasing by around 100,000 every year thereafter, we cannot achieve our goals without paying due attention to the industrial sector, which can assimilate the bulk of this manpower. The great challenge we are facing is the continuing formidable growth in population. I will not say much, but will be content to mention some figures so that we may consider this. Every family that produces more sons than it can provide for will produce sick, ignorant, and homeless sons.

On 1 July 1981 Egypt's population was 43.3 million. On 1 January 1996 it reached approximately 60.3 million. In other words, in 15 years the population rose by 18 million [figure as heard]. We must feed, teach, house, and find jobs for them. Any growth in population creates new burdens for the State. If we did not implement development projects, did not build new towns and factories, and did not develop agriculture, how could we live? In the year 2,000 the population will increase by 24-25 million. How can we survive? Where will we find jobs? We are implementing investment projects and running around, like the rest of the world, to find jobs for citizens. We must create 0.5 million work opportunities this year. This figure will increase by 100,000 each year. I do not mind if we have the resources. The time will come when Egypt will need 1 million job opportunities a year. [Audience member is heard proposing early retirement at 55] We do not know what we will do when we need to create 1 million job opportunities each year. Where will we find the investment? If I retire you at 55, what will you do? How can I create 1 million jobs? You want to retire to take a job in the private sector and let your son find a job [in the public sector]? No. Let us be reasonable.

The State's burdens in education and health have increased. In 1981 there were 8.6 million university students. Today there are 16 million. I will give you some figures so that you can see if early retirement will solve the problem. If you have a good idea share it with us. We do not close doors. But early retirement does not solve the problem.

If population growth stops, then that is something else. I was in Siwah [an oasis near the border with Libya]. A small village, al-Jarah, has a population of 306. One dies, another is born. Its population has remained steady. [laughter] The population has not changed in years. Here [in the rest of Egypt] one person dies and 1 million more arrive. [more laughter]

In the past four months the prime minister has named projects including 4 billion pounds of tourist projects and 14 billion pounds of industrial projects. [applause]

We must provide for this vital sector—the industrial sector. I mentioned it earlier but you have probably forgotten what I was saying before. We must give it the opportunity to flourish so that it can achieve a 9-percent annual growth rate. Only this can enable us to create new jobs for young people. Our ambitious aim for the next few years is to make Egypt one of the main Middle Eastern countries attracting industrial investment. We want it to become a major global export center. This requires great effort. All the industrial countries are vying for new markets for their exports. They are fighting for markets. Look at the major G-7 bloc. When its members realized that the Far East [preceding two words in English] was producing so much that it was threatening to swallow up all the markets, they held a meeting to discuss the issue. I am afraid that if we act too slowly in increasing production and introducing

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new ideas, both blocs will conspire against us and turn us into mere markets. We cannot shoulder the burden of being a market only. We produce goods for our own markets but we also need external markets in which to sell our products and create new jobs. I need to find new markets to create jobs, increase production, and provide a living to workers, engineers, and the public in general.

What strengthens our hope of increasing our exports is the constant increase in private investment. This year private investment amounted to over 22 billion pounds. Most of this money was channeled to the manufacturing sector and used to attract additional foreign investment. I urge the government to continue its efforts to eliminate any remaining obstacles that hinder or delay industrial investment. The government must direct its efforts to the constant upgrading of infrastructure projects to open new outlets for economic development. It must finish building the new industrial zones north of the Suez Gulf, in Port Said, and west of Alexandria, and make plans for new industrial areas in the south of the Nile valley.

Tourism must stay at the forefront of the investment projects to which the government and the public give priority. This is particularly important, because domestic capital is increasingly eager to invest in tourism. We hope Egypt's share of international tourism will, in the next few years, increase in line with its tourism resources.

Equal to our interest in the manufacturing and tourism sectors at this stage of increased production is a necessary interest in the agricultural sector. This sector still represents the major occupation of a huge segment of Egypt's population: Our people and kin in the rural areas made sacrifices for years before it recently became possible to liberalize the prices of agricultural products so that they could, for the first time, receive a realistic return for their hard work. A huge effort was made in this sector in the past few years, adding 1.4 million feddans to the land being cultivated in the country, served by a 4,000-km network of new irrigation canals. This huge effort must be exploited in a way that will ensure a rewarding revenue for the people. We must pay attention to export crops and set newly reclaimed land aside for their cultivation so that the export of these crops can balance our increasing food imports.

Brothers, sisters, we are trying hard in every field of national endeavor to achieve the desired Egyptian progress. Our only objective is to enhance the homeland's stature and improve the life of its sons. These objectives are linked, because the homeland cannot be strong unless its sons are proud and strong, enjoying security and stability on their land, living a dignified life, and enjoying perfect equality before the law under the aegis of fundamental guarantees of human rights and equal opportunity without a hint of fanaticism, favoritism, or bias. [applause]

The strength of the homeland lies in the deep affiliation of its sons and their commitment to the common interest, their sense of responsibility and duty, their concern for good performance, and their ability to show solidarity, cohesion, and compassion. Proceeding from this integrated concept of the relationship between the individual and society, we are convinced that the individual is the mover, center, and goal of development. Without the individual's enthusiasm and contribution, development will stumble and the goals will get lost in the labyrinth of bureaucracy, exploitation, monopoly, and illegal profit. Development the benefits of which do not cover everyone and that only helps a limited minority that monopolizes the revenue of the national effort is no good.

Inasmuch as we pay attention to increasing the national product with a high growth rate, we are also concerned with increasing an individual's share of national production to ensure steady and continuing improvement in his income and standard of living. We are also eager to increase the standard of services, particularly education, health, housing, and public utilities, to an appropriate level. We are concerned with ensuring the sound distribution of development projects to the various provinces of Egypt to ensure compensation for the provinces that are more deprived, particularly in Upper Egypt. Our goal is fair, balanced, and continuing development to serve the Egyptian people.

Much improvement has been made in wage levels. They have doubled on eight occasions in the past 14 years. You might say this is impossible but I want to tell you that salaries and wages in 1981 totalled 2.5 billion Egyptian pounds. In 1986 they were 4.5 billion, in 1991 9 billion, and in 1995 17 billion. This year the salaries and wages target totals 23 billion pounds. In 1981 we spent 2.5 billion on wages and salaries. This figure increased by approximately 20 billion Egyptian pounds this year. The per capita annual income increased to $911 in 1994 and will reach $1,030 in 1996. Per capita annual income in 1981-1982 was $610.

We hope that in the next few years, with the beginning of the year 2,000, there will be a tangible increase in average wages and salaries on a par with other countries. Huge progress has been made in all services despite the enormous annual increase in population. I do not want to bother you with many figures. I just want to mention two figures that are significant. In the past few years we have repeatedly increased expenditure on health services, which now totals 3.6 billion pounds. A

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few years ago expenditure on health services did not exceed 319 million pounds. The figure has increased from 319 million to 3.6 billion Egyptian pounds. We have doubled the sum spent on education to 11 billion Egyptian pounds. Previously the sum was 954 million pounds. [no precise timeframe specified in previous five sentences]

The sum spent on education has been increased on 11 occasions. We consider the promotion and modernization of education programs to be the only sound approach to building a society capable of coping with the challenges of the modern age. Education, knowledge, science, and invention are the most serious and effective factors in production. We are primarily concerned with the necessary services of the sons of workers and farmers, the backbone of development and the people who shape progress.

The important aspects of the new world are the increasing role of knowledge, education, science, and invention in the process of production. These aspects enable the producers to diversify their commodities, reduce costs, and expand their use. The workforce must be better educated, more specialized, and better trained. This requires reconsideration of the current structure of Egyptian manpower to ensure that it meets the realities of the new world. This goal cannot be achieved without technical education that will promote the individual's skills and capabilities and without promoting advanced training programs for Egyptian manpower.

We are also responsible for fair geographical distribution of development plans to ensure balanced services and benefits to the various provinces of Egypt and to compensate Upper Egypt's governorates, which suffer a high birth rate, meager resources, limited arable land, and insufficient services and productive projects.

The infrastructure for six new towns and 18 industrial zones will be prepared this year. Most of these towns and industrial zones will be built in Upper Egypt, namely, in al-Minya, Asyut, Suhaj, Qina, and Aswan. [applause] Small industries will be set up in these zones to provide new work opportunities for thousands of youths, who will be given land free of charge and easy loans. Land reclaimed for agriculture will be distributed to university graduates.

Brothers and sisters, we are starting a new phase of a successful march that aims to release the homeland's resources and capabilities. The difficulties have been removed. The path has become clear and safe. Negligence and bureaucracy are no longer justified. There can be no feeble excuses to skirt responsibility. The decision is clear and unambiguous. It calls for exploiting, in the best possible way, all the country's resources and for encouraging new resources that strengthen the country's capability and strength. Confusion, anxiety, and lack of direction are no longer justified. The decision is clear and does not tolerate doubt or hesitation. It is based on freeing up the resources of the private sector and the initiatives of individuals to the full so that development will increase and spread throughout Egypt. There is no time to waste. The race is hard, the competition is tough, the distance great, and the gap increasing. The train of progress does not wait for its passengers as we approach the 21st century. Lagging behind is no longer justified. We have prepared the right foundations for a major renaissance. Our nation is now harnessing its resources, dusting off the obstacles of the past, and embracing all its sons, who are pushing the wheel of progress on a clear road illuminated by clear and honorable signs. This road is lit by our insistence on cohesion, solidarity, and tolerance out of concern for the homeland's unity and social safety. It is lit by our insistence on giving equal rights to every section of society and on establishing justice and fairness. It is lit by our profound faith in this people's ability to achieve their objectives and hopes if they unite and adhere to Egyptian patriotism.

We have faced immense difficulties. We have confronted grave dangers to realize these achievements, to reach the shore of safety, and to ensure that Egypt restores its vitality and the homeland is prepared for a real phase of progress.

We thank God for assisting us in our difficult course, for helping avoid mistakes, and for leading our march to the shore of safety. We thank God for uniting us under the banner of justice and for illuminating the road for us with the light of science and knowledge. We thank God for uniting our great people while seeking to achieve their supreme objectives and great hopes and for providing them with national accord and solidarity in difficult times. We thank God for giving us strength and providing us with clear vision so that we will pursue the course of righteousness. We thank God for providing Egypt with a strong labor base before which challenges become easy and obstacles and difficulties collapse. [applause] We have a conscientious labor base that realizes its major national responsibility, knows its course, and offers its efforts and sweat for the sake of God and the homeland. May God grant us success and protect our march. He is the best provider and the best protector. May God's peace and mercy be with you.

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Egypt: Mubarak, Libya's al-Qadhdhafi Review Arab, Regional Issues

NC2404131096 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1230 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Muhammad Husni Mubarak has received a telephone call from Brother Colonel Mu'ammar al- Qadhdhafi, leader of the Libyan revolution. They exchanged views on several Arab and regional issues.

Al-Qadhdhafi congratulated President Mubarak on the occasion of Sinai Liberation Day.

Egypt: Cairo University Students Demonstrate Against Israel

NC2404152496 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1414 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 24 Apr (MENA) — Student demonstrations at Cairo University have continued for the third day running to denounce Israeli actions and Israeli bombardment of civilians in south Lebanon. The demonstrators demanded a halt to normalization of ties with Israel because it is not sincere about peace.

The demonstrating students, who began their march from the university's Law School, carried posters saying that Israel has violated all man-made laws, norms, and humanitarian considerations by attacking old men, women, and children. The posters said that Israel is flouting all international resolutions.

The demonstrators urged the international community and the major powers to adopt a firm position against Israel, to condemn it, and force it to accept a cease-fire.

A large number of students from many colleges participated in the demonstration. They toured the campus and then stood in a peaceful demonstration in front of the Administration Building.

Egypt: Musa Urges Immediate Cease-Fire in Lebanon

NC2404160996 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1500 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has called for an immediate cease-fire in south Lebanon, emphasizing that the current assaults will have an adverse effect on the peace process and the region's general security and stability.

The foreign minister remarked that all the region's nations, particularly the parties to the Middle East peace process, must not enter into alliances or form axes that will increase tensions and threaten regional security and peace.

In remarks to reporters after meeting with the Greek foreign minister in Athens today, 'Amr Musa added: It is not possible to speak of peace and stability in the Middle East except in the context of a reciprocal wish by the region's countries to safeguard the peace process, pursue active economic development, and provide mutual and balanced security.

For his part the Greek foreign minister said that Egyptian and Greek views are in agreement over Middle East peace. He added that if Israel continues its attacks on south Lebanon, this will threaten the entire region's security and stability, particularly as Israel wishes to enter into military alliances with other countries. He affirmed that Greece rejects the recently signed military agreement between Israel and Turkey.

The Greek foreign minister noted the closeness of Egyptian and Greek views on various local and international issues. He said that his talks with 'Amr Musa dealt with bilateral issues and several international matters.

Foreign Minister Musa also met with the Greek defense minister, discussing recent developments in the Balkans and the Middle East.

Egypt: Columnist Assails Clinton, Peres Stances on Lebanon

NC2504112696 Cairo AL-AKHBAR in Arabic 21 Apr 96 p 16

[From the "Idea" column by Mustafa Amin]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Israel that attended the Sharm al-Shaykh summit was not the same Israel we are seeing today in Lebanon. There is a big difference between those who appealed for peace and those who are calling for killing, slaughter, the destruction of homes, and displacement of 0.5 million Lebanese people from their homes. Shim'on Peres, who, just the other day, held out an olive branch, was not the butcher who is ordering his army to fire bullets at children, women, and old people. We do not think the Israeli elections alone prompted the Israeli prime minister to change so completely and repudiate all that he had declared. The ministers who attended the Israeli Cabinet meetings in the past few days say Hitler chaired these meetings, not Shim'on Peres, that he supported the massacre, demanded its continuation, and rejected the intercession of the countries that appeal for a halt to the fighting.

The President Clinton who called for stability, security, and peace in the Middle East was not the same Clinton preventing the UN Security Council from passing a resolution condemning Israel and supporting the war, justifying the Israeli crimes, and defending the massacre that has shaken the world.

The reason for this change is the same one prompting the Israeli prime minister to turn from an advocate of peace into an advocate of war—the presidential

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elections in November. Clinton's popularity started to shake where his success had once been guaranteed.

Neither of these leaders can reach the top office over the skulls of the dead and the blood of the martyrs, no matter what the Zionist influence in the United States. Zionism cannot wash its hands of the blood of victims or justify this disgraceful position that has aroused wrath worldwide.

The big loser is the Security Council, which was paralyzed before the massacre. The Security Council closed its eyes so as not to see the bodies of the dead, blocked its ears so as not to hear the moans of the victims, and closed its mouth so as not to speak a word of truth about this bloody carnage.

Libya

Libya: Delegation to UN Condemns Israeli Action Against Lebanon

LD2404212596 Tripoli Voice of Greater Arab Homeland in Arabic 1715 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Great Jamahiriyah's delegation at the United Nations has stressed that the Israeli aggression against Lebanon reflects the hidden grudge, the brutal nature, and the acts of terrorism which the Israeli enemy has been carrying out against the sons of the Palestinian people in Palestine and Lebanon for half a century.

The Great Jamahiriyah's delegation also stressed in a statement before the UN General Assembly, which is discussing the Israeli aggression against Lebanon, that the Israeli enemy, which adopted invalid pretexts to launch its continuous brutal aggression, aims basically to destroy Lebanon, terrorize the Lebanese people, and kill the babies, children, women, and old men everywhere, in addition to destroying farms, food factories, and power stations, and shelling [word indistinct] cars. These crimes are not less horrendous than the crimes of the Israeli terrorists at Bahr al-Baqar School [in Egypt], Sabra and Shatila [in Lebanon], and the Hebron Mosque massacre.

The Great Jamahiriyah's delegation also denounced the failure of the so-called Security Council to deal with the Israeli aggression against Lebanon. It pointed out that the council has been exposed, so that instead of assuming its responsibilities, as specified by Chapter Seven of the [UN] Charter, and passing a resolution condemning the aggression and forcing the aggressor to bear the consequences of his actions, it has been forced under pressure and maneuvering by a permanent member country to fall back and adopt a weak, poor, and unjust resolution that makes no distinction between the aggressor and the victim.

The Great Jamahiriyah's delegation pointed to the Israelis' failure to adhere to the implementation of all the resolutions issued by the Security Council. Instead of implementing them they have persisted in their terrorism, blowing up homes over the heads of their inhabitants, arresting hundreds of citizens, continuing to besiege towns and villages, and escalating and widening the aggression. The delegation stated that the continuation of the Israeli enemy's running amok in the Arab region is receiving direct support and backing from America.

The Great Jamahiriyah's delegation denounced the policy of double standards which America is exercising in the Security Council, where it stands as a barrier against the implementation of the Security Council's resolutions on the Israeli aggression against Lebanon by using the right of veto. Meanwhile it is very anxious to see the implementation of its unjust resolutions, against the Arab countries in particular.

In conclusion, the statement that the Great Jamahiriyah's delegation delivered before the UN General Assembly says that what Lebanon was and is still being subjected to is flagrant aggression and a threat to security and peace, not only in Lebanon but in the whole region. The statement says it is necessary to condemn the aggressor and make it bear the consequences of its aggression, in order to prevent any other crises from which dire consequences could ensue and threaten security and peace in the region.

Libya: North Korea Expresses Solidarity With Tripoli

LD2404163896 Tripoli JANA in English 1455 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tripoli, al-Tayr [April] 24 (JANA) — 'Umar al-Muntasir, the secretary of the General People's Committee for Foreign Liaison and international co-operation, received a message today from Kim Yong-nam the foreign minister and deputy chairman of the Executive Council in North Korea.

The message praised Libya's solid position against malicious campaigns to impose pressures and to create international conditions to renew the sanctions on the Great Jamahiriyah.

The message confirmed Korea's solidarity with the Libyan Arab people who are fighting courageously against all foreign challenges.

The Korean minister expressed to the secretary of the General People's Committee for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation the depth of relations established between the two countries and confirmed

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the need to consolidate and develop these relations in the joint interest of both friendly peoples.

Sudan

Sudan: SPLM Spokesman Denies Reports on Garang's Death

NC2404151996 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1458 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Nairobi, 24 Apr (MENA) — The rebellious Sudanese People's Liberation Movement [SPLM] has denied newspaper reports about a recent assassination attempt against SPLM leader John Garang at the hands of his bodyguards.

Official SPLM spokesman Bajan Amom [name and title as received] told MENA this afternoon that reports published by Sudanese government newspapers about this issue are false and that Garang is currently in south Sudan. He added that these reports expose the Sudanese Government's intentions and its hopes of making plans to assassinate Dr. Garang.

Sudanese newspapers, backed by southern Sudanese politicians opposed to Garang in Nairobi, had reported that Garang was subjected to an assassination attempt in Bahr al-Ghazal at the hands of his guards and that he was wounded during this attempt while three of his bodyguards were killed.

Bajan Amom strongly denied that the assassination occurred at all.

Sudan: Voice Recording of SPLA Spokesman Denying Garang's Death

AB2404182796 London BBC World Service in English 1505 GMT 24 Apr 96

[From the "Focus on Africa" program]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Once again there are rumors of the death of southern Sudan rebel leader, John Garang, of the SPLA [Sudanese People's Liberation Army]. [passage omitted]

On the line to Nairobi, Timothy Ecott asked SPLA spokesman Pagan Amom what he made of the claims that John Garang was dead:

[Begin recording] [Amom] What I say first is that this is not true. This is a big lie. This is one of the lies that Khartoum has been issuing and circulating several times—this is not the first time that they have said that. So, it is really not true, it is a wishful thinking.

[Ecott] The agency reports that have come out from Khartoum give quite a lot of details. They name one of the junior SPLA commanders. They say there was an argument between him and Garang about an attack on another group. There is quite a lot of detail in that. Would they have that detail if it was untrue?

[Amom] They have created and fabricated on their own these stories before with a lot of details, probably with even more details. You remember that the al-Ghazal [word indistinct] the government paper, issued, I mean, announced that....[pause] made public and printed that Garang was killed by somebody, they gave the name, the gave the place, they gave the process how he was wounded and where, how he was evacuated, and all that. So, this is not new. This is exactly what Khartoum is bent to do. This....[pause] the National Islamic Front Government is a force of extremists and fascists and they are [word indistinct] in demagogy and propaganda.

[Ecott] When did you last speak to him?

[Amom] It was last night that I spoke to him. It is specifically after this thing has come.

[Ecott] But you are not yourself worried about him?

[Amom] No, I'm not, you can see from my voice I am not worried. [end recording]

Sudan: Former Sudanese Minister Says Garang Not Dead, NIF Source of 'Rumors'

NC2504082296 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2140 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 24 Apr (MENA)—Faruq Abu-'Isa, a former Sudanese foreign minister and official spokesman of the National Democratic Grouping [NDG], which includes all the Sudanese opposition groups, has denied reports in the past few days of the assassination of Dr. John Garang, Sudanese People's Liberation Army [SPLA] commander and a member of the NDG. In a statement to MENA, he said he contacted the Sudan People's Liberation Movement [SPLM] commanders in Nairobi today. He said they confirmed to him that Garang is in good health and is performing his daily duties as SPLA commander in the battlefield.

Abu-'Isa stressed that the source of these rumors is the National Islamic Front [NIF] regime in Khartoum, which aims to give political cover to the Sudanese Government's feeble agreement with the Riak Machar group, which dissented from the SPLM. He said Machar was an unacceptable person to the political groups in the south and north. He warned that the rumors might be a preparation for a criminal scheme to assassinate Garang or other opposition leaders, particularly following information that the Sudanese regime is currently training terrorist groups in such criminal activities. He stressed

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that the practices of the ruling terrorist regime in Khartoum contradict the values and ethics of the Sudanese people.

Sudan: Opposition Says Riak Machar To Merge Forces With Government

EA2404223896 (Clandestine) Voice of Sudan Voice of the National Democratic Alliance Radio in Arabic 0400 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Riak Machar has begun to undertake the plan prepared for him by the National Islamic Front [NIF], namely, to fan tribal discord and to prepare military operations against the Sudan People's Liberation Army [SPLA].

Riak Machar left for Nasir town [southern Sudan] on 20 April to mobilize his militias and merge them with the militias of the NIF government. Thereafter they would be transported to Malakal and merged with the Malakal force so as to set up a united force that would later undertake military operations in the bor area. [passage omitted]

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Bahrain

Bahrain: Amir Receives Lebanese Envoy, Voices Support

JN2404111896 Manama WAKH in Arabic
0935 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Manama, 24 Apr (WAKH)—His Highness Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah, the amir of Bahrain, voiced the support of Bahrain's government and people for Lebanon and its people, noting that his country is offering them aid so they can overcome the ordeal of Israeli attacks against their territories.

During a meeting with Lebanese Ambassador to Bahrain Ahmad Qazzaz today, his highness the amir of Bahrain regretted the fall of innocent Lebanese victims as a result of the brutal aggression against that country.

His highness called for a cease-fire in Lebanon so that security and peace would prevail in the region, hoping that Lebanon will enjoy security, peace, and stability under its political leadership.

His Highness Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah praised the close relations between Bahrain and Lebanon. [passage omitted]

Bahrain: First Shipment of Assistance Sent to Lebanon

JN2404202896 Manama WAKH in Arabic
1140 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Manama, 24 Apr (WAKH)—The first shipment of urgent assistance for sisterly Lebanon was dispatched from Manama this morning to help ease the suffering of the evacuees and victims of the recent Israeli aggression against southern Lebanon. This shipment, which contains medicine and other medical supplies, will be delivered to the Higher Relief Committee in Lebanon. [passage omitted]

Kuwait

Kuwait: Russia Urged To Pressure Israel To End Hostilities

LD2404162096 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic
1243 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Kuwait, 24 Apr — Kuwait today urged Russia to exert maximum pressure on Israel to stop its attacks on Lebanon.

The Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry said the acting ministry undersecretary, Ambassador Khalid Rahallah, had made the call during a meeting here with the Russian ambassador to Kuwait, Petr Stegniya, to discuss efforts to stop the Israeli attacks on Lebanon which have been persisting for 14 consecutive days. [passage omitted]

The Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry quoted Rahallah as saying that it was important that: "Russia continue its role by keeping pressure on Israel to stop its attacks on Lebanon."

Kuwait: Israel Urged To End Operations, Withdraw Unconditionally

LD2404214296 Kuwait Radio Kuwait in Arabic
2100 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The State of Kuwait has called for the immediate suspension of Israel's military operations against Lebanon and to promise not to launch other acts of aggression against the Lebanese territories. Muhammad Abu al-Hasan, the State of Kuwait's permanent representative to the United Nations, addressing the General Assembly, has urged Israel to withdraw from Lebanon unconditionally as per Security Council Resolution 425 for the year 1978. Muhammad Abu al-Hasan has stressed that Israel must support and continue the peace process in the Middle East to reach a comprehensive, just and lasting peace on all negotiating tracks, especially the Syrian and Lebanese ones. The State of Kuwait's permanent representative to the United Nations has urged the international community to [offer] quick and immediate contributions to save the Lebanese people and support them in their ordeal so as to overcome its negative effects and build a safe and stable country for them.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia: Pilgrims Chant Anti-U.S. Slogans at Ka'bah

LD2404212996 Tehran IRNA in English
2115 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Mecca, April 24, IRNA — Hajj pilgrims at the Holy Ka'bah here on Wednesday [24 April] chanted "Allah-o Akbar" [God is greatest] and "Down with the U.S." and "Down with Israel" in a show of support for the oppressed Lebanese people. After the evening prayer at the sacred mosque (masjid al-haram), which was attended by hundreds of thousands of pilgrims, a large number of worshippers suddenly burst into cries of Allah-o Akbar (God is greater), 'al mout li America' (death to the U.S.) and 'al mout li Israeli' (death to the Zionist entity), in protest to the U.S.-supported crimes and atrocities of the Zionist regime in Lebanon.

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Saudi Arabia: Al-Safar Discusses Pilgrimage Rules With Iranians

LD2404172596 Riyadh Saudi Arabian Television Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 23 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In his office in Jeddah today Dr. Mahmud Bin-Muhammad Safar, minister of pilgrimage [affairs], received the deputy minister of culture and [Islamic] guidance and head of the pilgrimage organization in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

During the meeting, the established instructions and rules which pilgrims must comply with during their stay in the kingdom to perform the rites of pilgrimage were discussed. The meeting was attended by Shaykh Muhammad 'Ali al-Taskhiri and Dr. Mohammad 'Ali Hadi, Iran's ambassador to the kingdom.

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Iraq: Third Round of Oil-for-Food Talks Concludes

JN2504060596 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Iraqi and UN General Secretariat delegations at noon today concluded the sessions of the third round of their technical dialogue on exchanging oil for food, medicine, and other basic needs.

The two sides agreed to hold the fourth round of dialogue in early May after UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus Butrus-Ghali returns from a visit to Africa. He is scheduled to return to his headquarters in early May.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari, head of the Iraqi delegation, met with UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus Butrus-Ghali at noon today. The Iraqi and UN delegations held a session. Ambassador al-Anbari and Hans Corell [head of the UN delegation] spoke to journalists after this session. Al-Anbari expressed hope that the coming round of talks will be more successful in order to finalize an agreement and a memorandum of understanding. Corell said that he looks forward to the fourth round and hopes that the memorandum of understanding will be finalized during it.

Iraq: UN Adviser To Brief Security Council on Oil-for-Food Talks

JN2404183996 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1755 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] New York, 24 Apr (INA)—Iraq and UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus Butrus-Ghali agreed to resume the sessions of dialogue as part of their talks on exchanging oil for food and medicine by holding a fourth round in early May. [passage omitted]

The United Nations today said that Dr. Butrus-Ghali entrusted Hans Corell, legal adviser to Butrus-Ghali and head of the UN delegation, with briefing the Security Council member states this afternoon on the recent developments in the talks with Iraq.

An official UN spokesman said that the UN secretary general held a long telephone conversation with Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz, and that they agreed to resume talks when he returns from a visit to South Africa. The UN spokesman stressed that both sides have the political will to resume talks to circumvent difficulties. [passage omitted]

The UN diplomats who followed up the proceedings of the dialogue are unanimous that Iraq has strongly thrown the ball in the UN court by accepting balanced solutions to the issues related to implementation in order to reach an agreement. They added that the United Nations should prove the consistency of its previous positions which were announced before the Iraqi negotiating delegation. These UN positions were undermined by flagrant U.S.-British interference in the Security Council.

Iraq: 'Aziz Assails U.S., UK 'Interference' in Oil-for-Food Talks

JN2404160396 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1500 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 24 Apr (INA)—Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz said that during three long rounds, the Iraqi delegation to the talks with the UN General Secretariat, led by Ambassador Dr. 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari, did its best to reach a balanced agreement on the formula of oil for food and medicine.

'Aziz added: Upon directives from Baghdad, the Iraqi delegation displayed maximum degrees of balanced flexibility in order to find the appropriate solutions to the issues related to implementation.

In a statement to INA this afternoon, 'Aziz said: During the first and second rounds, talks between the Iraqi delegation and the UN General Secretariat delegation were held in a practical and professional atmosphere in which both sides were eager to understand the legitimate and practical considerations of each side through objective dialogue. Both sides were also eager to find balanced solutions to the issues related to implementation.

'Aziz added: At the beginning of the third round of talks, things proceeded with the same spirit, and there was a genuine opportunity to reach a balanced agreement. However, the interference by the U.S. and British sides in the course of negotiations obstructed this possibility. As a result of this interference, the UN delegation, on two consecutive instances, retreated on aspects over which both sides had reached an understanding in an objective and balanced manner.

Tariq 'Aziz said: It is well known that the UN Security Council members, particularly the permanent members, agreed from the beginning to authorize the UN secretary general to reach an agreement with the Iraqi side and pledged not to interfere in the talks. Council members abided by this pledge while the U.S. and British sides violated this agreement and blatantly interfered in the minutest details of the talks. That's why no understanding and agreement was reached during the third session.

Tariq 'Aziz added: Agreement was reached this morning with UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus Butrus-Ghali to resume the talks in a fourth session early in May.

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The deputy prime minister said that since the beginning of the talks Iraq has been eager to reach a balanced agreement with the UN secretariat that will neither harm Iraq's sovereignty nor endanger its national unity while satisfying UN concerns. However, the continued arbitrary interference by the United States and the United Kingdom in the talks threatens these talks.

Concluding his statement, Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz called on the UN Security Council members to exercise their natural role of dealing with the issue in a balanced manner and to prevent the two Council members from interfering in the talks motivated by tendentious political reasons that conflict with the UN Charter and international law.

Iraq: Jordan Asked To Participate in Murder Investigations

JN2504102596 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 25 Apr 96 p 25

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Amman — AL-RA'Y — The Iraqi Government yesterday asked the Jordanian Government to dispatch a number of homicide investigators to Baghdad to work together with the Iraqi team charged with investigating the murder of the Jordanian student Middayn Sa'id, who was killed in Baghdad two weeks ago. Jordanian investigators will also participate with the Iraqi authorities in the interrogation of the perpetrators of the other crimes in which a number of Jordanian citizens were killed. This came in a statement by 'Adil Ibrahim, press adviser at the Iraqi Embassy in Amman, who added that the Iraqi authorities expressed readiness to host a member of the family of the Jordanian student to follow up the details and progress of the investigation.

Ibrahim noted that strict security measures have been taken to protect all Jordanian citizens in Baghdad, adding that they are the focus of care and protection by the competent authorities. He said that the competent Iraqi authorities yesterday arrested the murderer of the Jordanian citizen, and that he is currently being interrogated to reveal all surrounding circumstances of the incident. [passage omitted]

Iraq: Opposition Radio Reports 'Clashes, Assassinations' in Tikrit

JN2404144396 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1215 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Scattered clashes, assassinations, and physical liquidations are occurring in Tikrit and its suburbs due to tensions that rocked the ruling tribe in the wake of killing Husayn Kamil in February. Within this context, information sources said that 'Iyadah Ghalib al-Mahmud, son of the tyrant's sister, was shot at several times on 15 April in the center of Tikrit. The sources added that the regime's organs did not arrest the perpetrators.

In the district of Hawijah, an armed clash took place between the tribes of al-Burayyash and al-'Ubayd which lasted more than six hours, after which a special force managed to end the clash. The sources asserted that the clash was due to a charge by one of the tyrant's guards, who is from the al-Burayyash tribe, against a dignitary of the al-'Ubayd tribe.

Iraq: Opposition Radio Reports Arrests Among Iraqi Officers

JN2404142796 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1232 GMT 24 Apr 96

[Report by Rida al-Wandi in Iraq's Kurdistan]

[FBIS Translated Text] Storming and arrest campaigns were launched in the past few days in a number of army camps in al-Mahawil, al-Musayyib, Abu-Ghurayb, al-Taji, and Mansuriyat al-Jabal. This was reported by the Iraqi opposition newspapers in liberated Kurdistan.

Eyewitnesses in the al-Taji camps said that armed groups from the clan of [words indistinct] stormed the camp's installations in the past few days and arrested a number of ranking officers and transferred them to unknown places. Meanwhile, reports said similar storming campaigns were launched in the camps of al-Mahawil, Abu-Ghurayb, al-Mansuriyah, and al-Musayyib.

Information from the opposition said that the detainees are being interrogated by officers from the special security units under the personal supervision of Qusayy, son of the tyrant. The opposition adds that the information circulated among the military circles says that the charges brought against a large number of detainees concern their indignation and resentment about the ruling regime and its sovereignty. Moreover, the regime suspects that there is a military coup attempt against it.

The managements at these camps refused to talk about the detentions and told the families of the detained officers, who inquired about their absence, that they knew nothing about them.

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Iraq: Minister of Justice Interviewed on Elections

96LH0169A Baghdad ALIF BA' in Arabic 13 Mar 96 pp 8-9

[Interview with Justice Minister Shabib Lazim al-Maliki by Salah al-'Amiri; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-'Amiri] With the approaching National Assembly elections on Sunday, 24 March, preparations by the parties responsible for implementing this creative democratic practice have intensified to produce the desired good results that express the will of the people in freely electing their representatives in the fourth National Assembly since the start of this democratic practice. Shabib Lazim al-Maliki, minister of Justice and member of the Higher Elections' Supervisory Committee, spoke to ALIF BA' about the National Assembly elections the measures taken to carry out this democratic practice.

The Justice Minister began the interview by talking about the preparations the Higher Elections' Supervisory Committee has made. He said:

[Al-Maliki] We announced the names of the candidates for election to the National Assembly on 4 March 1996 after the nominations were submitted within the legal time frame and the Higher Committee considered all the appeals. Six hundred ninety-eight candidates will contest the 250 National Assembly seats. The state will provide all their needs to conduct free election campaigns within the law until 23 March 1996. The National Assembly law has limited the period for campaigning from 4 March, the date on which the names of the candidates are announced, until 23 March, or 24 hours before the elections take place on 24 March.

[Al-'Amiri] In what respects the new National Assembly law is different from the previous law?

[Al-Maliki] In this period in which the crossing march is picking up speed and in the light of the new era manifested by the day of the great march, the new National Assembly law (law No. 26 of 1995) has outlined the procedures for the people's election of their representatives. The law expands the basis for nomination and election. It embodies the president leader's saying that "the right to exercise democracy should not be qualified." Consequently, Article 13 of the law gives the right to every Iraqi male or female, who have reached the age of 18, to vote. It also gives them the right to run for election according to certain conditions contained in articles 15-17 of the law. These conditions are loyalty to the homeland and to the supreme values of the revolution. A candidate must be an Iraqi citizen, born to Iraqi parents. He must be over 25 years' old and believe in God, the principles of the 17-30 July Revolution, and socialism. He must be of good standing regarding military service and not be a deserter. A candidate must not be married to a foreigner or sentenced for a crime. He must have a suitable degree of education of at least an intermediate school education.

The new law took into consideration the circumstances of the period that followed the issuance of the previous law and stipulated that a candidate should have effectively participated in Saddam's glorious al-Qadisiyah and the immortal mother of all battles. It prohibits the nomination of persons who engaged in trade during the oppressive blockade and stipulates that this ban should be in effect for two successive terms after the blockade is lifted.

To provide equal opportunities to all the candidates, articles 45-49 of the law regulate the principles of election propaganda, making such propaganda free within the limits of the law. The state pays the expenses of the election campaigns equally among all the candidates. It also stipulates that if a candidate does not receive 1,000 votes, he must repay the cost to the state.

[Al-'Amiri] Based on the democratic practice that will take place in our country on 24 March, how do you view the future?

[Al-Maliki] We view the next stage as a consolidation of the principles embodied in the democratic process. It is also a big step on the path of democratic development, which will be greatly enhanced when our Iraq achieves final victory after completing the crossing. Then the creative efforts and democratic dialogue will be united to provide the basis and means of construction, progress, and prosperity. As the president leader has emphasized, the National Assembly is one link in the revolution's democratic structure. It is a living manifestation of democracy that would lead to other democratic developments. The National Assembly manifests the profound meaning of democracy. The president leader summed this up by saying that "democracy demands profound interaction with the people."

[Al-'Amiri] How do you view the functions of the National Assembly?

[Al-Maliki] Legally, the National Assembly represents one of the most important institutions in the country. Members of the National Assembly are elected according to the law. We are currently living the experience of nomination and preparation for the elections.

Law No. 13 of 1995 regarding the regulation of popular referendums was an important step in this respect. This law was first applied during the referendum on the post of president of the republic after the Revolution Command Council amended the Constitution and established

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the principles for nomination for the post and the referendum on it.

As part of the trend toward administrative decentralization, Law No. 25 of 1995 regarding local people's councils gave these councils jurisdiction to develop the administration, production, and services in their areas. It offered them the chance to serve the revolution's goals by implementing their programs. The law regulates the election of the members of these councils.

Professional organizations and unions have exercised democracy throughout the years of the revolution. The leaders and committee members of these organizations and unions are elected according to their laws and regulations.

[Al-'Amiri] How do you view the nature of the election propaganda? Is this process left to the judgment of each candidate?

[Al-Maliki] The state shoulders the cost of the election propaganda of all the candidates whose names are announced by the Higher Elections' Supervisory Committee. Article 45 of the National Assembly law has endorsed the freedom of election propaganda within the limits of the law. Instructions No. 99 of 1996 outlined the procedures of election propaganda. The newspapers and magazines have already launched campaigns to identify the candidates to the people. Photographs of the candidates and election statements have also been published according to these procedures.

[Al-'Amiri] What happens if a candidate violates the election propaganda instructions?

[Al-Maliki] If a candidate violates the instructions in a way that disturbs the election process and the equality among all the candidates, the violator's candidacy can be withdrawn, according to Article 49 of the National Assembly law. This is besides the responsibilities a violator will assume under the current laws.

[Al-'Amiri] How are the election centers distributed?

[Al-Maliki] Based on the population census of 1987, we have established 52 election areas and 1,464 election centers in the country. Instructions No. 23 defined the specifications of these centers. They should be in distinguished locations known and close to the people. They should have enough space to accommodate the voters and ensure the good conduct of the election.

The Higher Committee also defined the specifications of the ballot boxes, which have been sent to all the election centers. The committee has prepared the voter's slip and the voting card, which will be supplied to all the election centers within the coming few days.

[Al-'Amiri] Will there be legal supervision in the election centers?

[Al-Maliki] The Justice Ministry has adopted the necessary measures. We appointed area election directors. We also appointed judges, members of the public prosecution, and legal officials in each election center. The Justice Ministry adopted the necessary measures to clarify all the legal provisions and instructions pertaining to the elections to all the officials involved to ensure the proper conduct of the elections and their agreement with the provisions of the National Assembly law.

[Al-'Amiri] The justice Ministry is assuming a vital task in carrying out the elections. How do you describe this task?

[Al-Maliki] We decided to hold central meetings in all the provinces on 22 March, or two days before the elections, to ensure the best application of the National Assembly law and the best democratic atmosphere for every citizen to exercise his election right and national duty. Meetings with the election directors are continuing in Baghdad to prepare for that day. We are also holding meetings with the judges and the heads of appeals' committees, which supervise the election committees in the provinces.

[Al-'Amiri] What qualifications were needed for choosing the election directors?

[Al-Maliki] The instructions of the Higher Elections' Supervisory Committee provided the specifications for the selection of these directors. According to the National Assembly law, the directors of election area will take the legal oath before assuming their task. The Justice Ministry has prepared all the requirements for these directors to take the legal oath, setting appropriate dates for this purpose.

[Al-'Amiri] What measures have you taken to promote the election process and make it easy for the electorate to vote?

[Al-Maliki] As part of the election preparations, we have prepared voters' lists, which we have sent to all the election centers where they will be posted so the citizens can check their names. Any citizen who does not find his name on the list can submit a petition to the election supervisory committee within 25 days from the posting date. The committee will examine the petition within three days from its submission and will inform the citizen of the outcome.

[Al-'Amiri] What documents are needed to prove a voter's identity?

[Al-Maliki] Several documents can be used. In its instructions No. 62, the Higher Elections' Supervisory

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Committee specified the documents that can be used to identify a voter during the voting process. They include, for example, the civil status card, the military service card, the Iraqi citizenship certificate, and the personal identity card.

[Al-'Amiri] At the end of the interview, the justice minister expressed the confidence of the Higher Elections' Supervisory Committee that 24 March will be a big national occasion on which our great people will prove their great awareness and deep faith in democracy. This faith was manifested on the day of the great march through which the people expressed their support for the leader of the democratic movement, leader President Saddam Husayn, may God protect him.

The day of the great march was significant, because it went beyond its legal and constitutional implications as a referendum on the post of the president of the republic. That great day turned into a national demonstration of support for the historic leader, President Saddam Husayn, may God protect him. Unique pictures were manifested on that day, expressing faithfulness and adherence to the path of dignity and sovereignty chosen by the leader of the march for his noble people. On the foreign level, the great march provided a decisive response to all the sick claims that have been made to undermine our democratic experiment. That day provided a living example to the world. The people rushed with spontaneity, sincerity, and enthusiasm to say "yes."

As for the future, the great march established a firm basis for developing the democratic practice in the country to enable the people to participate in shaping a bright future. One significant result of the interaction between the people and their historic leadership was the progressive steps made toward the crossing. Our people are living with joy at the signs of victory and prosperity manifested in the improvement of the economic situation. They look forward to a bright future in which the blockade would be lifted and the enemies would lose their wager.

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Israel: Peres on PNC Amendment, Lebanon Cease-Fire

TA2504062596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0405 GMT 25 Apr 96

[Telephone interview with Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres by correspondents Arye Golan and Shlomo Raz on 25 April; place not given — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Golan] Since the Palestinians have done their part, can you undertake....

[Peres, interrupting] Wait. When I have something to undertake, I will announce it.

[Golan] I want to ask you whether we will now carry out the redeployment....

[Peres] I know what you want to ask me, and I will respond at the appropriate time.

[Golan] What about the Palestinian expectations about opening the safe passage between Gaza and the West Bank, releasing prisoners, and easing the closure on the territories?

[Peres] Just as they fulfilled all their promises, we will fulfill all our undertakings. We must understand that the Middle East is undergoing a formidable struggle between the peace camp, which in my view includes the majority of the Palestinian people, and the camp of destruction and hatred, which is led by Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], Islamic Jihad, and Hizballah. Bombs are being hurled at us — we underwent four terrorist attacks — and there will be further attempts to harm us; I do not have any illusions about that. However, the resolution passed by 'Arafat and the Palestinian National Council [PNC] has first-rate historic importance. I said it is the most important change in the past 100 years. I did not mean in the world; I meant in the Middle East. It is definitive and calls for the following conclusions: One, that the Palestinians fulfill their commitments. 'Arafat's letter of 9 September, 1993 to the late Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin contains two basic commitments: The PLO views the signing of the Declaration of Principles as a historic event which inaugurates a new era of coexistence and peace. It is abandoning violence and all other actions that endanger peace and stability. The Palestinians are now endeavoring to uphold that undertaking, and I applaud them for that. Second, they undertook to amend the clauses in the Palestinian Charter that reject Israel's right to exist. Often, words kill just like bullets. Words create hatred, violence, mistrust. I view the Palestinian decision as a tremendous change, and I wish to express my deep appreciation to the Palestinians.

There were skeptics among us. Last week, a certain Knesset member, who knows everything, said publicly that the PLO will never amend the charter. He knows that nobody can be depended upon, that we can depend only on arms, bullets, and hatred.

[Golan] In the wake of the PNC's historic decision, will Labor withdraw its opposition to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state?

[Peres] That is not the issue. I have already said, and I repeat: In general, the platforms Israeli parties have presented to the voting public have not been upheld because they were usually the fruit of negotiations among ourselves. There is a difference between negotiating with yourself — there are, for instance, all kinds of proposals about negotiating with ourselves over Syria — or negotiating with somebody else. If you negotiate with somebody else, then come up with creative and new ideas. That is why Labor is saying to the public: Give us a mandate to negotiate a permanent solution which includes creative components that have previously not been put forward, as we did in the Oslo accords, which led to a tremendous turnabout. Look at what has happened since then. Like in the Oslo case, we will present it for public approval. There are several clear parameters on which we will insist. Jerusalem will not be redivided. The Jordan River will remain the security border. There will not be any unnecessary movement of people. But beyond that, we want a free hand to negotiate. But we will also not disclose prematurely to the other side what ideas we will come up with. Oslo showed that we came up with an agreement that gives us much more than was ever expected. I believe that will also happen in this case.

[Golan] You mentioned the skeptics. There are those who claim that it could be a huge hoax to extract from us first the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and then to continue the jihad in stages up to Jerusalem and perhaps even Yafo.

[Peres] First, those people live in the past. What do they mean when they say to take Gaza away from us? Was Gaza ever in our hands? What are they talking about? Those people are so bored when they talk with others that they only talk to themselves and repeat what they always tell themselves. Do we have Gaza? Look at the Likud; it is slowly becoming an admirer of Oslo and perhaps other developments. They are only starting out; let them rest a bit.

[Golan] I would like to discuss with you the chances of reaching a cease-fire in the north.

[Raz] I hear from political circles under you that a cease-fire might be possible by the end of the week. In the

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special interview you gave us on Independence Day, you spoke about two or three days. That timeframe ends on Saturday night [27 April]. Will there be a cease-fire and written understandings before your departure for talks with President Clinton?

[Peres] That is my hope. I think that within a day or so we will know where we stand. We must remain firm in our demands that the cease-fire be a real cessation of fire and not something cosmetic. Israel has the ability to remain steadfast. It is not pressured.

[Raz] But will Syria undertake to make sure that Hizballah does not shell the Galilee? Will it restrain Hizballah, or will the wording be ambiguous?

[Peres] There is an agreement that shelling on civilians on both sides is prohibited.

[Golan] Thank you, Mr. Prime Minister.

Israel: Peres—Signs of Lebanese Army Control; Syria Feels Pressed

TA2404151296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1400 GMT 24 Apr 96

[Report by Alan Ben-'Ami]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Today, Prime Minister Peres visited, among other places, some IDF [Israel Defense Forces] troop positions on the Israeli Lebanese border, and he also met with residents of Qiryat Shemona in the bomb shelters. As he ended his visit a short while, this is what he had to say to us:

[Begin recording] [Peres] I have been at several places today in the country. I found the morale of the people high and stable. I didn't hear complaints, neither from the civilians nor from the soldiers. People understand that this is an ongoing struggle, that we have to show stamina and determination. What we are doing now is really being conducted on two different tracks. One is: As long as they launch katyushas against us, we take all the necessary measures to stop them from doing it, either from the ground, or from the air, or from the sea, but our reaction is carefully done. We try not to hit civilians. You know, the trouble we have had all the time in Lebanon is that the Hizballah was hiding itself behind civilian life, behind civilian people, and in the same village they used to shoot from places where children and women were hidden. This was one of our problems. This is the reason why we are forced to separate, so not to hit any civilian. Even today, the army is very, very careful by selecting the target really to hit those that fire the katyushas and not to hit anybody else.

[Ben-'Ami] Prime Minister, Operation Grapes of Wrath is now entering its third week, and there's an impression perhaps that things are stalled. The Syrians are not rushing for an agreement, Hizballah says it doesn't want one, and katyushas are still falling.

[Peres] Well, I am not dealing with perceptions. When you negotiate or when you exchange fire, you have to show consideration and patience and are not reacting in order to create impression. We are reacting in order to create a new situation. [end recording]

The prime minister said that he believes Israel's Operation Grapes of Wrath will end as expected, he said, and he gave an intriguing answer when asked if there are any signs that the Lebanese Army is moving to begin some sort of control over Hizballah's activities: Maybe, said Prime Minister Peres.

From the north, this is Alan Ben-'Ami returning you to the studio in Jerusalem.

[Also reporting on the prime minister's tour of the north, Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1400 GMT on 24 April adds that Prime Minister Peres said that "the IDF is currently investing a great effort in locating the sites from which the terrorists launch the katyushas. The goal is to hit every house and every field from which missiles are fired." Peres further said that "Secretary Warren Christopher will return to Jerusalem this evening and that the two of them will meet tonight. He reemphasized that the operation will not stop before the government's clear goals are achieved. According to Peres, there are indications that the Syrians are feeling pressure from the situation in Lebanon and, consequently, there is a chance of a solution soon."]

Lebanon: Peres—'Important' Agreements on Lebanon; 'Gaps' Remain

TA2504092396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 25 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The meeting between Prime Minister Shim'on Peres and Secretary of State Warren Christopher ended a short time ago. The prime minister said that the negotiations on Lebanon so far have led to important agreements, but that very important details remain unresolved. He said that Secretary Christopher is leaving for Damascus to try to work out a more comprehensive accord, but that there is still a great deal of work to be done and the gaps remain wide. The U.S. secretary confirmed that wide gaps remain between the sides.

Jerusalem political sources told our political correspondent Shlomo Raz that in certain senses there has been a retreat in the Syrian position, even from the understandings reached in 1993. Secretary Christopher is due to return to Israel tonight from Damascus.

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Israel: 'Political Circles' Predict Cease-Fire Accord by Weekend

TA2504052896 Jerusalem Qol Yisru'el in Hebrew 0400 GMT 25 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Jerusalem political circles believe that an agreement for a cease-fire in Lebanon will be reached by the end of the week. Dennis Ross concluded after midnight reporting to the prime minister and the Israeli negotiating team on Secretary Christopher's talks in Damascus. Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz reports that there are still gaps between the Israeli and Syrian positions. That is why there is no cease-fire agreement and new understandings have not been reached. Peres will confer with Secretary Christopher this morning, and then the secretary will leave for another round of talks in Damascus.

Israel: Peres Advised Against U.S. Trip in Absence of Cease-Fire

TA2404174696 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1700 GMT 24 Apr 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres' close advisers recommend that his trip to the United States on 27 April be canceled if no cease-fire is achieved by then. Our political correspondent 'Imanu'el Rosen reports that Peres is scheduled to hold two meetings with President Clinton and is also slated to sign two defense agreements in the United States.

Israel: Details of IDF Debriefing on Qana Incident Released

TA2404175396 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1700 GMT 24 Apr 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] An IDF [Israel Defense Forces] debriefing about the circumstances of the mistaken firing on the village of Qana indicates that an IDF force that was nearby was attacked with mortar fire. Details about the debriefing which reached our correspondent Roni Daniyel indicate that a pilotless plane was dispatched to the site in order to detect the source of the fire, but it failed in its mission. A fighter helicopter was sent to the site immediately afterward, but the helicopter also failed to detect the source of the mortar fire because of difficult weather conditions. At that stage, two katyushas were fired from this area, and the IDF artillery returned the fire after its source was determined. The crew operating the mortar was hit as a result of the IDF artillery fire. Two terrorists who fired the mortar were killed, and two additional shells hit the Lebanese refugees in the village of Qana.

Israel: Savir—PNC Amendment 'Green Light' To Implement Accords

TA2504063196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0400 GMT 25 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Foreign Ministry Director General Uri Savir welcomed the change by the Palestine National Council [PNC] to the Palestinian Charter and said it was a green light to continue implementing agreements as well as redeployment in Hebron, taking into account security considerations on the ground.

The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] is preparing plans for establishing a permanent joint force of army and Israeli and Palestinian police units in Hebron to prevent friction between Jews and Arabs in the city after the army redeploys under the terms of the Oslo agreement.

Israel: Coalition Chairman Welcomes PNC Decision on Charter

TA2404191096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1900 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Ra'anan Kohen, chairman of the coalition, welcomed the decision by the Palestine National Council [PNC], saying this is another victory for the voice of sanity on the way to peace and proof that the Palestinians are capable of implementing the Oslo accords when they so desire. Ra'anan Kohen called on the Likud to admit its mistake and to recognize the Oslo accords.

Israel: Netanyahu Calls PNC Move 'Positive'

TA2504083796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0405 GMT 25 Apr 96

[Telephone interview with Likud Chairman Binyamin Netanyahu by correspondent Arye Golan; place not given — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Golan] Would you call this a happy day, an important day for you and the people of Israel, in the wake of the Palestine National Council's [PNC] decision to revoke the clauses in its charter calling for the destruction of Israel?

[Netanyahu] If all those clauses have been revoked, that of course is a positive move, but up to this moment, we cannot say that that step has been completed. What took place is that the PNC gave a committee power of attorney to amend in the future clauses it decides contravene the Oslo accords. We demanded the abrogation of 22 clauses which say that Zionism does

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not exist, that the State of Israel must be destroyed, that the armed struggle continues, clauses that in fact nullify the nationalism of the people of Israel. It is a very grave charter, and therefore, I would be very angry about extending unlimited credit to a move that I would like to take place.

[Golan] You are saying that the charter or the relevant clauses calling for the destruction of Israel have not been annulled?

[Netanyahu] Not yet. It is important that you be precise in your reports. What they have done is to give power of attorney to annul it in the future. I hope that will happen.

[Golan] Was power of attorney not given to the legal committee to draft a new charter?

[Netanyahu] What if they announce that only five clauses are revoked? We also do not know how they will word the new charter.

[Golan] The decision is that they revoke all the clauses that contravene the letters of mutual recognition between the late Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin and PLO leader Yasir 'Arafat.

[Netanyahu] That is correct, and we must make sure that the interpretation of what contravenes and what does not will not be made unilaterally by the Palestinian Authority [PA], but mutually. I had hoped that the entire charter would be revoked. But, what we must do first — and Israel must insist on that — is to ensure that the clauses of the new charter recognize the State of Israel and Zionism unequivocally and directly. I heard the prime minister say that is obvious and has already occurred. That is not true. We must make sure it happens. I want it to take place so that we can advance cautiously and responsibly. The prime minister said earlier that the Palestinians have upheld all their commitments. I regret to say that they have not. Former Shin Bet head Karmi Gilon said recently that 'Arafat is not fulfilling his commitments in the war against terrorism. We are witness to the terrible attacks. To the extent that progress has been made, it is due to the pressure applied by part of the Israeli public. Progress must be cautious and made with patience, without fantasies about a new Middle East. There must be a full amendment of the charter. If that happens — and I hope that what took place is the start of such a positive direction — I will regard it as a positive move which will permit us to advance in the political process, if they fulfill the other terms, especially on terrorism.

[Golan] What you are saying is that nothing important took place yesterday.

[Netanyahu] I would not say that. It is still too early to say what happened. I think it is a move in the right direction, but we should not exaggerate and evacuate Hebron. I believe we should not withdraw from Hebron at all. I have no doubt that this government in its unlimited support for anything occurring on the other side without ascertaining whether commitments are really fulfilled, will also evacuate Hebron, which is not only the city of our forefathers, but to my regret, has also become a focus for Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] in Judaea and Samaria, and that will cause very serious security damage.

[Golan] As you recall, the government undertook to evacuate Hebron, and you even accept the fact that the Oslo accords exist and must be upheld.

[Netanyahu] I am not waiting for this or that PNC resolution. I have said that we recognize certain facts that have been created on the ground, but we do not have to be hasty in determining new facts on the basis of half promises. We will insist that all the promises made by the PA be upheld. What is a contract? It is something upheld by both sides, but the PA still continues its propaganda and incitement against Israel. We will insist that that stop. Hamas terror continues, while the PA is doing nothing, according to Karmi Gilon and others, to stop it. We will insist that it act. PLO institutions continue to operate in Jerusalem and endanger the unity of the capital. We will close them. In other words, the difference between the prime minister and me is that we will insist that the PA's undertakings be upheld. Under those conditions, a government headed by me will advance toward negotiations on a permanent settlement while reducing the risks in the Oslo accord.

[Golan] And you are still not ready to meet with 'Arafat?

[Netanyahu] I said that if the PA upholds all those things — which I believe every Israeli citizen understands must be fulfilled since otherwise peace does not have any meaning, while we insist on peace with meaning, with security, and with Jerusalem — I will definitely reconsider my stand on the matter.

[Golan] Thank you Mr. Netanyahu.

Israel: Closure on Territories Extended Until 26 Apr

TA2404132696 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1300 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The general closure imposed on Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza on the eve of Independence Day will be extended until the morning of 26 April. At the same time, the entry of prominent personalities

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and medical teams will be allowed. Also permitted will be work in the industrial zones in Judaea and Samaria, including the 'Atarot zone. The passage of goods through the Qarni and Sufa crossings in the northern Gaza Strip will also continue.

Israel: Katyusha 'Loaded With Phosphorus' Fired 23 Apr

TA2404183696 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1800 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated text] Eight katyusha volleys hit the Galilee Panhandle and four volleys hit the Western Galilee today. Our correspondent Ilan Ro'e reports that one of the katyushas which fell in the Galilee Panhandle yesterday was loaded with phosphorus. This missile landed in an open area and did not cause any damage.

Israel: 'Terrorist' Killed Preparing 10-Kg Charge in East Jerusalem

TA2504092296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0900 GMT 25 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The body of a man with marks from an explosion was found near the football stadium of the village of Umm-Tuba in East Jerusalem at midday. Our police affairs correspondent Aviv Bushinsky said the man was a terrorist who was killed while trying to prepare a 10-kg explosive charge.

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Jordan: U.S. Said Pledged To Bomb Iraq if Jordan Attacked

MM2404153396 London AL-MAJALLAH in Arabic 21-27 Apr 96 p 14

[Unattributed report: "Secret Agreement Between United States and King Husayn"]

[FBIS Translated Text] A diplomatic source in the U.S. capital, Washington, has said that there is a secret agreement between the United States and King Husayn of Jordan which stipulates that U.S. forces will hasten to help him if Iraq attacks Jordan (in retaliation for allowing U.S. aircraft to use Jordanian bases). The source added that U.S. aircraft flying over Iraq have been ordered to bomb certain locations "in cases of emergency" or if they are exposed to any Iraqi threat or shelling. The U.S. aircraft carrier Eisenhower has returned to the Gulf region (following the U.S.-China confrontation over Taiwan). The aircraft it is carrying are ready to participate in any extensive air bombardment of Iraq.

The source pointed out that the Iraqi targets to be bombed have been identified in advance and include the Iraqi Forces' Command and the residences of President Saddam Husayn, who will certainly be a target. However, the source declined to confirm or deny the existence of a plan to provoke Iraq into shelling Jordan in preparation for U.S. bombing.

Jordan: Editor Views 'Tension' in Relations With Iraq

JN2404104896 Amman AL-HADATH in Arabic 22 Apr 96 p 5

[Commentary by the political editor]

[FBIS Translated Text] Jordanian-Iraqi differences have quickly degenerated into political hostility with a concomitant tension marking bilateral relations. Relations have deteriorated to such an extent that hitherto red lines have now been crossed. As evidence of this, one could cite Jordanian Government reports of a plot by Iraqi security agencies to assassinate Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti, resulting in "a total collapse of trust" characterizing bilateral dealings and the expulsion of Iraqi diplomat Husayn Faraj, assistant to the Iraqi Press Attache in Amman 'Adil Ibrahim, who, according to the same Jordanian Government reports, had been tracking the prime minister's movements as part of the assassination scheme.

According to al-Kabariti, during his famous meeting with the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee, 36 attempts at sabotage had been foiled. A high-placed Jordanian official told AL-HADATH Iraq must have had a hand in some of these operations that were intended to destabilize Jordan in retaliation for political differences that have been worsening since Husayn Kamil's defection and subsequent murder.

AL-HADATH had published details of a deal concluded between Abu-Nidal [Sabri al-Banna] and Iraqi intelligence to destabilize Jordan.

Negative developments on the political front between Jordan and Iraq have reflected themselves in the security sphere. In the space of less than five months, five Jordanian students enrolled at Iraqi universities and institutes were killed, the last being Middayn Abu-'Innab, who was murdered on a street in the Karradah Kharj neighborhood one evening while in the company of friends. As for the other four, three were killed in an as yet unexplained car accident. The fifth had been lured by an Iraqi Intelligence officer from Amman to Baghdad where he was shot in the head, and then certified by Iraqi authorities to have died from natural causes.

An informed government source disclosed that, in light of the exceptional sensitivity now marking relations between Jordan and Iraq, the prime minister views these cases in the larger context of Baghdad's premeditated security escalation against Jordan and Jordanian nationals residing in Iraq. It was also against the background of such relations that the prime minister called in the Iraqi ambassador in Amman and impressed on him that Iraq must be held responsible for the safety of all Jordanians in Iraq, and hinted to the Iraqi envoy at the involvement of his country's security services in these incidents.

The prime minister also recalled Jordan's ambassador in Iraq, Bassam Qaqish, to Amman for consultations about the cases of Jordanians killed in Iraq.

Protest measures of a political and diplomatic nature by the Jordanian Government are not ruled out. These may go as far as the expulsion of the Iraqi ambassador, who is regarded with unease by the government and security agencies, seeing that he is in charge of Iraq's security network abroad and that during his tour of duty the Iraqi Embassy in Amman has become Iraq's principal security post in the world, disbursing funds and issuing orders to secret security operatives abroad.

Government sources told AL-HADATH they do not rule out several measures within the framework of what they call "fortifying the Jordanian internal front" following the negative developments in relations between Jordan and Iraq.

According to a high-placed government source, speaking to AL-HADATH, the clearing of Salamah Ni'mat,

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the London-based AL-HAYAH correspondent in Amman, in the libel suit and his acquittal of charges of undermining national unity brought against him by the public prosecutor concerning a report he had filed about Iraq's infiltration of Jordanian press and economic establishments and the existence of around 42 prominent politicians, a former minister, and journalists in the pay of Iraq, will give impetus to a new direction by the government to move against what he called "agents of the Iraqi regime" inside Jordan.

The government, the source adds, is serious in taking legal action against these "agents", and competent security agencies are now collecting concrete evidence proving they have been receiving financial and political support from the Iraqi Government.

The source indicated that there will be surprises in the near future, with video and audio cassettes being in the possession of government authorities showing clandestine movements and encounters by certain journalists, publishers, politicians, and economists with the personnel of the Iraqi Embassy and other embassies.

Once an official indictment is ready, the source said the government will drop its bombshell and press charges against the suspects.

According to documented evidence, Husayn Faraj, assistant to the Iraqi press attache, was involved in extending funds and bribes to a number of Jordanian journalists. That was cited as one of the reasons for the Jordanian Government ordering him out of the country.

Jordan: Iraqi Ambassador Leaves Amman on 'Id al-Adha Holiday

JN2504074696 Amman AL-ASWAQ in Arabic 25 Apr 96 pp 1, 19

[Report by 'Imad 'Abd-al-Rahman]

[FBIS Translated Text] A responsible source at the Foreign Ministry said that before leaving Jordan on Tuesday, 23 April, Iraqi Ambassador in Amman Nuri al-Wayyis sent an official memorandum to the Foreign Ministry stating that he wishes to spend the 'Id al-Adha holiday outside Jordan.

The source added that the Iraqi ambassador informed the Jordanian officials that an embassy official was appointed charge d'affaires until the end of 'Id al-Adha holiday.

The source was responding to a question posed by AL-ASWAQ on reports which alleged that the Iraqi ambassador left Jordan without prior notice and without informing the Jordanian Foreign Ministry of his desire to travel abroad, as is dictated by diplomatic norms.

Jordan: Demonstrators Condemn Israeli 'Crimes' in Lebanon

JN2404203496 Amman Jordan Television Network in English 1900 GMT 24 Apr 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Jordanians took to the streets for a second straight day to express their support for the Lebanese people. Citizens from all sectors of life, including MP's, heads of associations, and other political and popular figures joined a rally that headed to the United Nations headquarters in Amman, demanding an end to Israel's military operations against Lebanon. They condemned Israel's crimes against the civilians and called for the withdrawal of the Israeli Army from southern Lebanon.

Jordan: Royal Family Member Attends Israel Independence Celebration

JN2504074596 Amman AL-ASWAQ in Arabic 25 Apr 96 p 19

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman, PETRA—Israeli Ambassador in Amman Shim'on Shamir hosted a reception at the Forte Grand Hotel on the occasion of Israel's independence day. The celebration was attended by Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'd Bin-Zayd, representatives of foreign diplomatic missions in Jordan, and a number of invited guests.

Jordan: King Husayn Bridge To Close to West Bank, Gaza Traffic

JN2404202596 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1500 GMT 24 Apr 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Sources from the Public Security Department said the King Husayn Bridge will be closed on Sunday, 28 April, to all citizens arriving from and leaving to the West Bank and Gaza Strip. However, the bridge will remain open to foreigners and residents of the city of Jerusalem only on the occasion of al-Adha holiday.

Jordan: Security Fears Over 'Jordanian Bosnians,' Other New Groups

MM2504093396 London AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI in Arabic 24 Apr 96 p 3

[Unattributed report: "Amman: Security Concern Caused by New Groups, Notably the 'Jordanian Bosnians'"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman, AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI — At a time when the Jordanian Government

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is continuing its campaign of arrests among the movements and organizations opposed to the peace process in the region and which bear many names, unknown movements and organizations have started issuing statements and undertaking some activities in Jordan's poor areas.

The government has said that it is now closely "monitoring" small Islamist and non-Islamist groups which have started to undertake activities intended to spread uncertainty on Jordanian territory.

Jordan has said that in the past six months over 36 terrorist acts aimed at its national security were committed. Observers and politicians have said that the banned peaceful opposition organizations have adopted new methods in "spawning" small groups, which are seen as threats to Jordan's stability.

The "spawning" of small limited-membership groups in Jordan has become one of the methods adopted by the major Islamist movements and organizations because of the Jordanian security organs' vigilance and strength.

These groups hold limited-attendance meetings in the mosques and homes of the poor quarters, in order to carry out various activities whose objective is to incite against the peace process in the region, including organizing internal lectures and issuing bulletins and statements under their names. These small groups have adopted various methods to cause change, but mostly follow an Islamist line.

The weekly press has shown extreme interest in following up these groups' activities. They are also being constantly watched by the security organs, with the judiciary currently conducting the trials of various organizations and networks, including the "Allegiance to the Imam" [bay'ah al-imam] group, the Islamic Renewal group, the Liberation group, and the "Jordanian Afghans" group, all of which are unknown movements in Jordan.

The emergence of these groups has coincided with the significant political events in the region and with Jordan's signing of the peace treaty with Israel, while known and traditional political fronts such as both the Popular and the Democratic Fronts for the Liberation of Palestine, the Islamic Liberation Movement, and the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, in addition to the main PLO opposition groups and factions for which the Jordanian arena was a major arena, have left the political arena.

The most notorious of the budding networks which are now causing concern for the security organs is a new network known as the "Jordanian Bosnians," along the lines of the "Jordanian Afghans" who carried out a series of blasts in Jordan some three years ago, for which they were tried.

Security officials said that Jordanian Islamist leaders who were fighting in Afghanistan and moved to the Balkan states and fought alongside the "Bosnian" Muslim force, have returned to Jordan and are considering continuing their jihad activities. These elements have joined a new organization in Jordan, dubbed by the press "Jordanian Bosnians." Iran backed and armed these elements against the Serbian forces in Bosnia. They have an extremist fundamentalist outlook on Islamic issues and have returned to Jordan following the solutions imposed by the United Nations on their presence in former Yugoslavia.

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Lebanon: Al-Hirawi Comments After Meeting Clinton in Washington

NC2404160796 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1535 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The meeting between President Ilyas al-Hirawi and U.S. President Bill Clinton at the White House ended at 1745. Following the meeting, President al-Hirawi answered reporters' questions:

[Begin recording] [al-Hirawi] The intentions that His Excellency President Clinton, expressed to me are good, saying that he wants peace in the Middle East, however, permit me to repeat what the Bible said quoting Saint Thomas; namely, I do not believe in words, I believe in deeds. I did not come to the White House on my own. I accepted an invitation addressed to me by President Clinton. And let it be known that I did not come for humanitarian assistance. I came for political assistance. I want peace in Lebanon, nothing more or less. Syria is not occupying part of our land. The Syrian Army is present in Lebanon at the desire of the Lebanese Government. As for the militias, they are situated in the areas occupied by the State of Israel. There are no militias present in the Lebanese territories where the Lebanese Army and Internal Security Forces are deployed.

[Unidentified correspondent] Politically, what did you request from the United States?

[Al-Hirawi] I requested the implementation of Resolution 425 because they are the ones who made it. The Lebanese Government can guarantee security in northern Israel. [end recording]

Lebanon: Al-Hariri Heads to Shtawra To Meet Secretary Christopher

NC2404112896 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1111 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri ended his receptions at the Government Palace a short time ago and traveled to Shtawra to meet U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher. Reports have indicated that Christopher might arrive in Shtawra shortly.

Since morning, Lebanese Army and Internal Security forces and Syrian security forces have adopted strict security measures all along the road from Dahr al-Baydar to al-Masna'. Lebanese Army and Syrian security forces are deployed all along this road and at intersection of roads leading to Damascus.

Lebanon: Christopher Crosses Border Point, Heads to Shtawrah

NC2404145696 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1420 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher crossed the al-Masna' crossing point [at Lebanese-Syrian border] at 1713 in a convoy that included more than 100 vehicles. The convoy included Syrian security vehicles, Lebanese Army vehicles, and U.S. Embassy guards.

[Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic at 1424 GMT adds: "U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, who arrived in Lebanon a short while ago, was met at the Lebanese-Syrian border by Education Minister Robert Ghanim. Christopher then headed for Park Hotel in Shtawrah."]

[Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic at 1433 GMT adds: "U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher arrived at the Park Hotel in Shtawrah at 1730; that is, three minutes ago.]

Lebanon: Al-Hariri Comments on Talks With Christopher

NC2504063796 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0450 GMT 25 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri stated that our concern focuses on reaching a cease-fire agreement as quickly as possible. He said: We would like to see the Lebanese people live in peace. Our country, he said, has suffered a great deal from the current situation and we certainly know that we will benefit much from peace. He said: We explained to U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher that, despite all that has happened and is happening, Lebanon still aspires to achieve peace. We hope, he said, to see the United States play a role that will end the cycle of violence which is killing civilians and destroying the homeland's infrastructure. He said: We talked for a lengthy time and we can say that the meeting with Secretary of State Christopher was objective and fruitful. There are several points that need clarification and Christopher promised to exert efforts to give the required clarifications and we are waiting for his answer shortly.

Al-Hariri further said: I thank Secretary of State Christopher for his personal efforts at these difficult times, as everyone is looking forward to seeing calm return to the region. I would like to assert to the Lebanese people that we are seeking a better situation in the near future and that Christopher shares us our view. He said that Christopher promised to do all he can to facilitate

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the return of civilians to their homes and end the chaos prevailing in the south. For our part, al-Hariri said, we will do all we can to liberate our occupied land and see peace prevail in the region as it is in the interest of Lebanon to achieve peace, noting that peace will be in the interest of all parties.

Asked if he would back an agreement that would limit Hizballah attacks on Israeli forces in south Lebanon, al-Hariri said: We are not discussing Hizballah, but are discussing security and cease-fire and as long as there is occupation we must deal with it as such. However, we must also care for civilians on both sides of the borders and must take care of the future and seek a final solution to the situation in the region. [passage omitted]

Lebanon: Birri, al-Hariri Comment After Meeting Christopher

NC2404172596 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1700 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher has stated that his talks with Chamber of Deputies Speaker Nabih Birri and Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri centered on searching for ways to reach a cease-fire. He noted that his visit is the biggest demonstration of his country's expression of interest in Lebanon. He noted that there are difficult problems on the road to reaching a solution to the Israeli-Lebanese crisis.

For his part, Speaker Birri stressed that a solution requires 48 hours. He added that he had asked for some clarifications from Secretary Christopher.

Prime Minister al-Hariri described the talks with the U.S. Secretary of State as fruitful.

Lebanon: Birri Hopes for 'Quick Results' After Meeting Christopher

NC2404185496 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1800 GMT 24 Apr 96

[Statement by Chamber of Deputies Speaker Nabih Birri following his meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher in Shtawrah on 24 April — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] We thank very much the Americans who have disclosed the truth about the Israeli aggressions that are taking place in the south. Hence, came this meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher and his accompanying delegation to discuss the question of ending these attacks on the Lebanese territories. Naturally, we discussed the details of reaching a solution, at least temporarily, and toward reaching a permanent solution that the United States and others, most importantly sisterly Syria, are seeking. As a result, the principles that Lebanon is interested in — that the agreement be concluded with it, that civilians must not be bombarded or harmed, and the need to safeguard our right to liberate the land — all these matters were the subject of a detailed discussion. His excellency the prime minister and myself presented our views. Naturally, his excellency the U.S. Secretary of State will convey and study these views. We hope that there will be quick results in order to end the bloodshed and the massacres that have taken place in the south.

Lebanon: Iranian Foreign Minister Arrives

NC2504074396 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0733 GMT 25 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati arrived at the al-Masna' border point at 1020 [0720 GMT] today. He is leaving al-Masna' for Beirut for a meeting with Chamber of Deputies speaker Nabih Birri and Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri.

Lebanon: Iran's Velayati—Lebanon Under 'U.S.-Israeli Aggression'

NC2504082896 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0805 GMT 25 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati arrived at the al-Masna' border post at 1020 [0720 GMT] today. Hamayun 'Alizadeh, Iranian ambassador to Lebanon, said at al-Masna', prior to Velayati's arrival, that the Americans are facing an ordeal and an impasse. He said the aggression against Lebanon is a U.S.-Israeli aggression.

Lebanon: Iran's Velayati, Ambassador on 'Aggression,' 'Resistance'

NC2504092196 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0834 GMT 25 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Less than 24 hours after U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's visit to Lebanon, Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati arrived at the al-Masna' point on the Lebanese-Syrian border at 1015 today. [passage omitted]

Iranian Ambassador in Lebanon Homayun 'Alizadeh said the United States is in a deadlock and held it responsible for the aggression against Lebanon.

In a statement, Minister Velayati emphasized that the international community supports the Lebanese Government, people, and resistance. He added: Two weeks into the Israeli aggression against Lebanon, we see the resistance to occupation is stronger. The government, people,

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and resistance enjoy the Iranian Islamic Republic's support.

He expressed his confidence that international pressure and continued resistance will produce positive results. He asserted Iran's support for the state in repatriating refugees to their villages.

Velayati headed for Beirut to meet Chamber of Deputies Speaker Nabih Birri and Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri in the Quraytim Palace.

Lebanon: Hizballah Leader Meets al-Shar', Velayati; Statement Issued

NC2504070796 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0505 GMT 25 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] As part of the continuing contacts to halt the Zionist aggression against Lebanon, Hizballah Secretary General Hasan Nasrallah has met Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' in Damascus. Hizballah released a statement saying that emphasis was placed on the resistance's freedom of action and movement in confronting the occupation and the Israeli agents. The statement also stressed that operations against the occupation must not be frozen or halted and that real guarantees must be secured to protect Lebanese civilians. The statement noted that these constants are basic and that Hizballah will not back down on any of them. These constants, the statement said, are considered by Hizballah and Syria to be a result [of the Israeli occupation of the border strip]. The statement said that Syria and Hizballah will discuss other details.

The Hizballah delegation also met Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati and discussed the results of continuing contacts. Velayati stressed that the Islamic Republic of Iran will continue to offer humanitarian aid to the Lebanese people. He stressed his country's readiness to help reconstruct the areas destroyed by the Zionist war machine.

Lebanon: 'Sources'—Iran Rewarded Hizballah Leaders With $10 Million

NC2504081296 Kafr Killa Voice of the South in Arabic 0714 GMT 25 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Informed Lebanese sources say that Iran recently rewarded, in the last few days, [Hizballah Secretary General] Hasan Nasrallah and his deputy Na'im Qasim because they were able to prompt Israel to implement Operation the Grapes of Wrath.

The sources, who asked to remain anonymous, refused to specify the amount involved but said it is was close to $10 million, to enable the men to buy homes and pay salaries to a number of the party's members.

The sources added that this move angered Lebanese Government sources, who accuse Hizballah of undermining Lebanon's economy. The sources said they intend to ask Hizballah to help in the reconstruction process and give aid to the people displaced.

The sources noted that Hizballah is operating under orders from Iran to stop the peace process in the region. Hizballah, the sources added, is not working in favor of Lebanon's progress in rebuilding but is seeking to destroy Lebanon, per Iran's orders.

Lebanon: Fadlallah—U.S. Favors Israel in Cease-Fire Talks

NC2404213596 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 2100 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Al-Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah has stated that the United States is trying to ensure that Israel gains in the cease-fire talks what it has failed to gain in its war. He affirmed that the front opposed to the U.S.-Israeli plan is firm and strong. He noted that the Islamic Resistance does not want to replace the state.

Lebanon: Hizballah Arrests Man for 'Dealing With' Israel

NC2404185596 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1800 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A source close to Hizballah has announced that Hizballah arrested citizen Mustafa Khalil Mar'i, who was born in 1964 in Mashgharah, western al-Biqa', on charges of dealing with the Israeli enemy. Elements from the party found him in possession of a transmitter, a video camera, and a regular camera.

The source added that Mar'i was monitoring the centers and homes of Hizballah in Mashgharah and that he works for the enemy's intelligence service, which he joined during his stay in Argentina.

Lebanon: Hizballah Denies Arresting Israeli Spy

NC2404213796 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 2100 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In a contact between the NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY and Hizballah's Central Information Unit this evening, Hizballah has denied reports that it arrested a Lebanese citizen from Mashgharah in western al-Biqa' on charges of spying for Israel.

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Lebanon: Security Situation in South Updated

NC2404111896 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1050 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The most recent security report from the NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY notes that two Israeli helicopters overflew the coast from the south to Khaldah al-Sa'diyyat. An enemy warship is currently cruising off the coast.

At 1330 resistance men fired a new salvo of Katyusha rockets at the Israeli settlements in the occupied territories. [passage omitted]

Just in from the newsdesk: The townships of Jibshit, Shukin, and 'Adshit are currently coming under heavy artillery bombardment from the enemy positions.

At 1305 enemy warplanes resumed their attacks on al-Sultaniyah, Bi'r al-Salsil, Bi'r al-Shajarah, Majdal Silm, Khirbat Silm, al-Sawwanah, al-Jumayjimah, Qabrikha, Shaqra, Bra'shit, and Tibnin. The same towns came under artillery shelling.

Elsewhere, the bridge at the western approach to Jwayya was destroyed by the air raid on Jwayya. The town is now isolated. The Lebanese Army is working to reopen the road.

Lebanon: 'Responsible Source' on 'Sabotage Organizations' Presence

NC2504103696 Kafr Killa Voice of the South in Arabic 0930 GMT 25 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] We have received the following from a responsible source: Al-Nur Radio yesterday reported that a meeting was held in Dar Bayrut involving representatives of sabotage organizations. At the meeting the Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] representative in Lebanon, Mustafa al-Liddawi, called for implementing sabotage operations in Israel.

The presence of Mustafa al-Liddawi and his like in Beirut confirms that the Lebanese capital has again become a center for Lebanese and Palestinian sabotage organizations, just as it was before 1982. These organizations are not just working against the security zone and south Lebanon.

We reaffirm that Hizballah and other Lebanese and Palestinian sabotage organizations that receive support from Syria and Iran have no immunity, not in Beirut, Ba'labakk, Sidon, or anywhere else, as Israel proved with the operation, Grapes of Wrath.

If terrorist leaders think they can protect themselves in their offices in Beirut by using civilians as a protective shield, they are wrong, because Israel's hand will reach them anywhere.

Residents of Beirut who want to see their city return to an era of progress should oust terrorists from their midst to avoid reliving the tragedies of the past.

Lebanon: Raids on Southern Areas; Supply Convoy Comes Under Fire

NC2404105296 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1020 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Israeli military aircraft raided eastern al-Rashidiyah at 1150 [0850 GMT] today. Another raid targeted the area between Ra's al-'Ayn and al-Sma'iyah. There was a raid on al-Shihabiyah at 1115 and a raid on the town of al-'Izziyah at 1050. At 0930, a raid was carried out on the Wadi Jilu-Jwayya Road in Tyre Province.

An officer in the UN Interim Force in Lebanon said a supply convoy came under artillery fire at 1145 as it travelled on the (Baslayh) Road in Tyre Province. An armored personnel carrier was hit by shrapnel and none of its passengers was hurt. The convoy returned to Tyre.

The Israeli navy is delaying the arrival of ships at Beirut Port. Head of Beirut Port Jihad Min'im said Israeli warships at sea some 20 km from the shore are delaying ships 24 or 48 hours before allowing them to enter Beirut Port. [passage omitted]

Lebanon: Israeli Forces Bombard South Areas

NC2504064996 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0605 GMT 25 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Israeli acts of aggression—artillery bombardment and air raids—are continuing for the 15th day in a row. The Israeli navy is bombarding the coastal highway between Beirut and the south for the seventh day in a row. THE NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY's [NNA] correspondent in Sidon reports that the Israeli bombardment has been targeting the northern approach to Sidon from al-Awwali since dawn.

Traffic on the al-Zahrani highway heading toward Tyre and al-Nabatiyah is almost at a standstill following the Israeli warships' bombardment of the highway. There is heavy traffic on the iron crossing set up by the Lebanese Army across the al-Awwali River between 'Alaman and Bqasta.

THE NNA correspondent in the central sector reported that five 155-mm rounds fell in Yatar at 0630 today. Three 120-mm rounds landed north of the post occupied by the Nepalese contingent of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon. At 0740 Jabal al-Za'tar, Tibnin, and Bra'shit came under a 155-mm artillery barrage.

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THE NNA correspondent in Tulin reports that the Israeli forces are directing a sporadic artillery barrage at the area around al-Qaysiyah and Khirbat Silm.

THE NNA correspondent in al-Nabatiyah reports that the areas of 'Atshit, Zibdin, Shukin, and the al-Bayyad quarter are coming under sporadic bombardment.

Lebanon: Israeli Helicopters Raid Areas; Katyushas Fired

NC2504073596 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0708 GMT 25 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Israeli helicopters have raided Kafra, burning five civilian vehicles. There were no civilian casualties. At 0905 today al-Malikiyah in the western sector came under an artillery barrage. At 0830 Siddiqin came under a 155-mm artillery fire from Tallat Rshaf and Jabal Humayd. Retaliating for the Israeli aggression, the resistance fired a new volley of Katyusha rockets at occupied northern Palestine at 0835 today.

Israeli military aircraft are now overflying the south. Israeli threats to the Lebanese people to leave their villages continue. Israeli warplanes fired eight missiles at Halaway.

Just in from the editors' desk: Israeli military aircraft have, for the third time since 0945 today, raided the al-Hawsh area of Tyre District. The Israeli forces have directed heavy artillery fire at the outskirts of Kafra, Yatar, and al-Malikiyah from their posts in the hills of Tayr Harfa and Jabal Humayd.

Lebanon: Israeli Air Raids, Apache Flights Reported in South

NC2504073996 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0720 GMT 25 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] As result of the raid by enemy aircraft on the Hanaway-'Ayn B'al Road, the road has been cut off. The aircraft dropped strange objects in the area around that road.

At 1005 today, military aircraft carried out three new raids on the town of al-Hawsh east of Sidon, firing air-to-ground missiles. The aircraft are still overflying the area. Apache aircraft are also flying over the sea and Tyre.

Lebanon: Israeli Aircraft Raid Area; al-Hariri Receives Velayati

NC2504084796 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0827 GMT 25 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Just in from the editors' desk: Israeli military aircraft raided the road between Mahrunah and Mazra'at Mishrif targeting a bridge in the area near the road.

Israeli military aircraft carried out five raids on the al-Hawsh area between 1030 and 1105 today. Hostile aircraft are now overflying Tyre and the central sector. The Israeli forces are bombarding the axes of 'Atshit, Jibshit, Shukin, the al-Qa'qa'iyah bridge, and the Kafr [named indistinct] bridge, which is closed. The Israeli forces are still bombarding the Kafr Za'tar and al-Bayyad quarter in al-Nabatiyah.

Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri received Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati at Government House at 1115. Chamber of Deputies Speaker Nabih Birri also attended the meeting. Al-Hariri is expected to meet French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette at 1230 today.

Lebanon: Israeli Air Raids Cut Road Linking Tyre to Qana

NC2504094996 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0919 GMT 25 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Just in from the editor's desk: The Israeli military aircraft this morning cut the road linking the villages in the Tyre area with Qana. A security source noted that the Israeli aircraft dropped several bombs on the road linking Hannawiyah and Qana east of Tyre. The bombs caused a 10-meter deep hole, cutting the road and trapping a number of journalists in Qana. Security sources also said the Israeli aircraft raided Hawsh Basmah, on the outskirts of Tyre, but that there were no casualties as a result.

A source in the UN Interim Force in Lebanon said that the Israeli aircraft have so far carried out 523 air raids on Lebanon since the military aggression against Lebanon began.

Lebanon: Helicopters, Warplanes Raid Areas; Overflights Reported

NC2504123096 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1205 GMT 25 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] At 1411 today two enemy helicopters raided the residential areas of Khirbat Silm and dropped two air to ground missiles.

Israeli warplanes then raided the same town and helicopters staged five raids.

At 1400 enemy planes raided Jibshit and 'Abba while helicopters staged several raids over Srifa. Amal Movement antiaircraft guns confronted the helicopters.

Enemy planes have been overflying western al-Biqa' since 1430.

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At 1350 enemy planes overflew al-Ghanduriyah and Frun at low altitude, drawing antiaircraft fire from the Amal Movement.

A security source denied that the new iron bridge erected by the Lebanese Army two days ago was bombarded today. It said the bridge can still be used in both directions and that shells had fallen near the old bridge near al-Awwali.

Lebanon: Israeli Planes Raid South; Army, UNIFIL Working To Reopen Cut Roads

NC2504114496 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1108 GMT 25 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Just in from the editor's desk: Israeli military aircraft have raided Jibshit and 'Abba. A military source said a short while ago that as a result of the Israeli air raids on the South today and yesterday, the following roads have been cut: the Jabal al-Butm-Kafra road, the Siddiqin-Qana road, the al- Sultaniyah-Tibnin road, the Dayr Ntar-Bi'r al-Salasil road, the Hannawiyah-'Ayn B'al road, and the Mishrif-Mahrunah road. Lebanese Army forces are working in coordination with the UN Interim Force in Lebanon [UNIFIL] teams to reopen these roads.

We have just received a report that Israeli helicopters have been flying low over the villages of al-Ghanduriyah and Frun since 1350 and are drawing antiaircraft fire from the Amal Movement fighters.

Lebanon: UN Supply Convoy Shelled; Casualties Reported

NC2504122596 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1215 GMT 25 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Just in from the newsdesk: At 1510 [1210 GMT] today, the Israelis shelled a UN supply convoy. There is an unknown number of casualties. More details will be given as soon received.

Lebanon: Israeli Army Warns More Villagers To Leave Immediately

NC2404152796 Kafr Killa Voice of the South in Arabic 1505 GMT 24 Apr 96

[Communique no. 5 "for today"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Israeli army is continuing its operations against Hizballah terrorists in southern Lebanon and elsewhere. Within this context, the Israeli army will attack any vehicle or house suspected of being used by Hizballah.

The Israeli army's operations will include the following towns and villages: al-Mansuri, al-Qulaylah, Buyut al-Siyyad, and al-Malikah.

The Israeli army repeats its warning to the inhabitants of these towns and villages who are still in their homes to leave them immediately. Anyone who does not leave puts himself at risk and is responsible for his own actions.

He who forewarns is excused.

Lebanon: Radio Warns Citizens of South To Leave

NC2504052696 Kafr Killa Voice of the South in Arabic 0500 GMT 25 Apr 96

[Communique No. 1 "for today"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Israeli army continues its operations against Hizballah terrorists in south Lebanon and elsewhere. Civilians present near Hizballah offices, centers, commands, and homes must keep away from those places so as not to endanger themselves. This is because Hizballah continues its subversive and irresponsible actions using Lebanese civilians as shields for their terrorist operations. Citizens of south Lebanon who have not as yet been able to leave their homes must now leave immediately. Travel south is still forbidden and anyone who travels south endangers himself. The Israeli army will continue to bomb every vehicle considered suspicious. Travel north is allowed.

Lebanon: Radio—Navy To Target Vehicles Heading South

NC2504052996 Kafr Killa Voice of the South in Arabic 0510 GMT 25 Apr 96

[Communique No. 2 "for today"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Israeli Navy continues its operations along Lebanon's coast, including the areas from al-Awwali north to north of Tyre in the area of the al-Qasimiyah bridge, to prevent Hizballah terrorists, vehicles, and weapons from travelling southwards. Every suspicious vehicle will be targeted. Citizens must refrain from leaving Beirut southward for Sidon and Tyre via the al-Awwali and al-Qasimiyah bridges. Anyone leaving southwards risks his life. Travel north is allowed.

Lebanon: Radio Reports Israeli Aircraft Hit Hizballah Targets

NC2504053696 Kafr Killa Voice of the South in Arabic 0518 GMT 25 Apr 96

[Communique No. 3 "for today"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Israeli military spokesman announced today that Israeli Air Force aircraft last night bombed terrorist centers in the western sector, in the

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villages of Siddiqin and Barish. The pilots scored direct hits on the targets.

Lebanon: Southerners Warned To Leave Homes, Towns

NC2504064096 Kafr Killa Voice of the South in Arabic 0610 GMT 25 Apr 96

[Communique No. 4 "for today"]

[FBIS Translated Text] To the Lebanese citizenry: The Israeli army has resumed its operations today against Hizballah terrorists in southern Lebanon and anywhere else they are operating. In this context, the Israeli army will strike any means of transport or home suspected of being used by Hizballah.

The Israeli army's operations will include the following towns and villages: al-Nabatiyah, Jibshit, 'Adshit, Haruf, Shukin, Khirbat Silm, Majdal Silm, Bi'r al-Salasil, Tibnin, al-Sultaniyah, al-Sawwanah, Shaqra, Yatar, Kafra, al-Mansuri, al-Qulaylah, Majdal Zun, al-Hinniyah, al-Samiyah, Buyut al-Sayyad, Zibqin, Siddiqin, and al-Malikiyah.

The Israeli army repeats its warning to the residents of these villages and towns who are still in their homes to leave their homes immediately and to keep away from the area. Anyone who remains in these villages and towns and their surroundings will be endangering his life at his own risk. He who forewarns is excused.

Lebanon: Civilians, Military Warned Not To Repair Damaged Roads

NC2504115796 Kafr Killa Voice of the South in Arabic 0957 GMT 25 Apr 96

[Communique No. 5 "for today"]

[FBIS Translated Text] To Lebanese citizens: The Israeli army is continuing to strike Hizballah personnel, bases, and offices, and to cut off routes used by this party.

To avoid hurting civilians, you should keep away from Hizballah offices and installations and refrain from repairing roads hit in Israeli army operations.

Anyone who is still near Hizballah personnel or offices is risking his life. Civilians and Lebanese Army personnel who try to repair damaged roads or who are present in the areas where these routes have been cut off are risking their lives because the Israeli army will return to hit these routes to prevent the transportation of arms and reinforcements to Hizballah. He who forewarns is excused.

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Syria: Christopher Received by al-Asad 24 Apr; al-Shar' Comments

JN2404125896 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1115 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Hafiz al-Asad received U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher at the People's Palace at noon today. Mr. Christopher is accompanied by Dennis Ross, U.S. coordinator of the Middle East peace process; Robert Pelletreau, assistant U.S. secretary of state for Middle East affairs; and Christopher Ross, U.S. ambassador in Damascus.

The meeting was attended on the Syrian side by Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar'; Nasir Qaddur, minister of state for foreign affairs; Assistant Foreign Minister 'Adnan 'Imran; as well as Walid al-Mu'allim and Dr. Mikha'il Wahbah, members of the Syrian delegation to the peace talks.

In a statement to SANA, Mr. Christopher said: We are working hard with both sides to reactivate the 1993 understanding and to achieve a permanent cease-fire. The two sides are working hard in this respect. I believe that the time has come to reap some results. It is important to achieve some stability and security for civilians on both sides of the border and to guarantee civilians a peaceful life. I hope the parties will arrive at decisions expeditiously, because each day more civilian lives are threatened. Asked if he expects a cease-fire to take place soon, Christopher said: It all depends on the concerned parties whom we are trying to help achieve this objective.

For his part, Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' told SANA: I welcome Mr. Christopher once again in Damascus. As you know, Secretary of State Christopher comes to Damascus frequently and we truly appreciate his efforts to achieve a comprehensive peace and to achieve a cease-fire in Lebanon. Mr. Christopher is always welcome here and this is something that will never change here in Damascus. The president held many good talks with Secretary of State Christopher. Within a few minutes, Mr. Christopher will be meeting with the president. I am sure the talks they will hold will be fruitful and will take place in a friendly atmosphere.

Asked if Secretary of State Christopher will visit Beirut this time, and whether this visit will help end the Israeli shelling of Lebanon, al-Shar' said: We believe that his visit to Beirut will help the parties, but it is up to Mr. Christopher himself to decide on the date of his visit Lebanon. Until this happens, we will offer every possible help to facilitate his visit to Lebanon.

Mr. Christopher arrived in Damascus at 1130 today on a visit to the Syrian Arab Republic. He was received at Damascus International Airport by Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar'; Walid al-Mu'allim, Syria's ambassador in Washington; Christopher Ross, U.S. ambassador in Damascus; and some senior Foreign Ministry officials.

Syria: Christopher-al-Asad Talks To Resume 25 Apr; Christopher Departs

JN2404181096 Damascus Syrian Arab Television Network in Arabic 1730 GMT 24 Apr 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad received U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher at the People's Palace at 1200 today. [passage omitted]

The two sides resumed discussion of the ideas presented in the previous meetings on the current situation in Lebanon, cease-fire, and revitalizing the July 1993 understanding among the concerned parties. The talks will be resumed tomorrow. [passage omitted]

Warren Christopher left Damascus this afternoon for Lebanon following the end of his talks with His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad on the situation in Lebanon. He is due to return tomorrow, Thursday, to resume talks.

Syria: U.S. Spokesman Nicholas Burns Cited on Talks

JN2404172696 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1615 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] Following the arrival of U.S Secretary of State Warren Christopher in Damascus today, U.S. State Department Spokesman Nicholas Burns told reporters that the U.S. secretary had a telephone conversation with Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres this morning. He said that the two officials discussed the U.S. cease-fire plan in Lebanon and the written agreement. He added that Secretary Christopher held talks with Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' immediately after his arrival. Christopher then departed for a meeting with His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad to present the American ideas and some Israeli proposals and to discuss holding negotiations on this document.

Burns added: We are here to make progress and to reach an agreement to stop the killing and shelling and to put an end to the killing of civilians in southern Lebanon. Burns expressed hope that progress will be made today, noting that the talks are difficult and very complicated. He said that Christopher will return to Israel this evening.

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Answering a question on whether Christopher will visit Beirut, Burns said: There is no plan to go there. Yesterday evening, we tried to go to Beirut, however, we were advised no to go due to the security and military situation.

Responding to a question on reports that a meeting might be held between Christopher and Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri, Burns said: Secretary Christopher held a telephone conversation with al-Hariri last night. They had good talks. Burns said that al-Hariri expressed understanding of Christopher's failure to visit Beirut last night. He said that al-Hariri expressed hope that discussions with the United States will be resumed through U.S. Ambassador in Beirut Richard Jones. The U.S. spokesman added that Christopher will hold contacts with the Lebanese prime minister over the next two days.

When asked about the Lebanese proposals presented to the U.S. ambassador in Beirut, Burns said: The Lebanese officials presented their own ideas, because Lebanon is the axis of our talks. The Lebanese people have suffered so much. We want to help them. We are attentively listening to their proposals.

Asked about the difference between the French and American initiatives, Burns said: Secretary Christopher held many contacts with French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette. France is our ally. We have good relations with France. We are exchanging viewpoints on the situation. However, our proposals are not identical.

On whether there is a date set for a cease-fire, Burns said: A date for a cease-fire has not yet been agreed upon. However, we are working hard to achieve this. We are determined to make progress.

Asked about the negative position of Madeleine Albright, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, at the UN General Assembly vis-a-vis the Lebanese complaint, he said that he hopes that any resolutions to be issued will be balanced and just.

Warren Christopher arrived in Park Hotel in Shtawrah, in the Lebanese al-Biqa' area, at 1730 today. Immediately after his arrival, Christopher met with Nabih Birri, speaker of the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies, and Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri.

Syria: U.S. Secretary of State Christopher Returns 25 Apr

JN2504093796 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0915 GMT 25 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher arrived in Damascus at 1130 today on a visit to Syria.

Syria: Nasrallah Calls U.S. Initiative 'Dictation of Terms'

JN2504121096 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1100 GMT 25 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Our radio correspondent in Damascus, Thana' al-Imam, asked Hizballah Secretary General Shaykh Hasan Nasrallah about the French and U.S. initiatives on the developments in Lebanon. He said:

[Begin recording] [Nasrallah] The first U.S. initiative which was discussed was not in fact an initiative, but an attempt to dictate Israeli conditions on Lebanon. It was a cunning political utilization of military aggression [words indistinct].

[Al-Imam] The first U.S. initiative which was amended?

[Nasrallah] Currently, I do not think there is a U.S. initiative, there is U.S. mediation. The U.S. secretary of state conveys the parties' viewpoints and tries to bring them closer. He always tries to coordinate matters so that the parties will reach a specific result or a specific agreement. I do not believe that we are now before a U.S. initiative. The U.S. initiative failed from the start. As I said, it was a dictation of terms. [end recording]

Syria: Al-Shar', de Charette Meet 24 Apr, Discuss Lebanon

JN2404210096 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 2015 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' and French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette held a session of official talks at the Foreign Ministry this evening. Assistant Foreign Minister 'Adnan 'Imran and Ahmad 'Arnus, director of the foreign minister's office, attended the talks on the Syrian side. Denis Bouchard, director of the North Africa and Middle East Department, and Jean-Claude Cousseran, French ambassador in Damascus, attended the talks on the French side. They discussed the Israeli aggression against Lebanon and the efforts to halt it.

Syria: Al-Asad, French President Discuss Lebanon on Phone

JN2404181596 Damascus Syrian Arab Television Network in Arabic 1730 GMT 24 Apr 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad received a telephone call from French President Jacques Chirac this afternoon. They discussed the situation in Lebanon and the current developments in this regard. President Chirac expressed interest in this

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issue and voiced hope that a cease-fire agreement will be reached as soon as possible.

Syria: De Charette Hopes for Cease-Fire Within 'Next 24 Hours'

JN2504111396 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0415 GMT 25 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette held a news conference at the French Embassy last night. Pressmen and correspondents of Arab and foreign news agencies and international television networks attended.

At the outset of the news conference, de Charette said: The consultations we held to reach a cease-fire and an understanding on not attacking civilians, who suffered bitterly over the past days, are making progress. The proposals France submitted on 17 April, two days after I arrived in the region, are still serving as a guideline. I believe that these ideas constitute headlines for action. We have not yet reached the end of the road. We are still working, and there is still much to do. However, I believe we are now at a positive stage, and we have accomplished a great deal. Today I can say that the sun might set with the hope that the dawn will carry the solution.

De Charette said that those who wager on France's frustration will lose. France is working honestly, and it has no interest other than alleviating the civilians' suffering, and returning the displaced families to their homes. He said that President Chirac is committed to the wellbeing of civilians.

De Charette said that things were sometimes slow, but are not so now, and that matters are now at a decisive stage. However, the situation took longer than necessary, he added.

De Charette stressed that the French proposals are the ones which are being discussed today.

He pointed out that he continuously exchanges opinions with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, and things are always satisfactory. He said: We are now working on the issues proposed by France, because what counts are the people and what is important is the families' return to their homes as soon as possible. We will be happy with this.

De Charette said he hoped a cease-fire would be announced within the next 24 hours, saying: Regarding such complicated and difficult negotiations, I cannot say that there is a set timetable.

With regard to Christopher's visit to Lebanon, de Charette said that his visit to Lebanon is a good thing, noting that the two sides' viewpoints are close. He added that it is inconsequential to discuss an alleged U.S. stand toward the French position. What counts is that all the parties concerned reach a formula for a cease-fire and for the return of the displaced to their homes. He said: Tangible and true progress was made in this regard. I believe we can be confident in this regard.

Regarding the French participation in the security committee, de Charette said: This issue is not that important for France, what is important is to implement the agreement and to stop attacking civilians. All these points are part of the current discussions.

Syria: De Charette Leaves for 1-Day Visit to Beirut 25 Apr

JN2504093996 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0915 GMT 25 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette today left Damascus for Beirut. He will return to Damascus this evening.

Syria: Al-Shar', Iran's Velayati Hold Talks in Damascus 24 Apr

JN2404205196 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 2015 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' and Iranian Foreign Minister Dr. 'Ali Akbar Velayati held a session of official talks at the Foreign Ministry this evening.

The talks were attended on the Syrian side by Ahmad 'Arnus, director of the foreign minister's office. On the Iranian side, the talks were attended by Kazem Khonsari, director of the Middle East and North Africa Department; and the Iranian ambassador in Damascus. The discussion dealt with the Israeli aggression against Lebanon and the cease-fire.

Syria: Velayati, de Charette Discuss Lebanon; OIC Meeting Planned

LD2404191296 Tehran IRNA in English 1902 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Damascus, April 24, IRNA — Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati and his French counterpart Herve de Charette reviewed the plan to end the Israeli aggression on Lebanon in their meeting here today. The two sides also underlined the need for reaching an immediate solution to halt the ongoing slaughter of the Lebanese people by the Zionist regime.

As part of his diplomatic efforts to end Israel's state terrorism against the oppressed people of Lebanon, the

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Iranian foreign minister has met the Syrian president and foreign minister as well as his French and Russian counterparts, who are also in the region on peace missions.

Meanwhile, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Mahmud Mohammadi told IRNA here today that following the Iranian call to the secretary general of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), ambassadors of Muslim countries in Geneva will soon hold a meeting to discuss the Lebanese crisis. He said the OIC has played a constructive role for strengthening solidarity among Islamic countries, as borne out by its efforts in the Bosnian crisis, and once again Muslim solidarity could help restore the rights of the Lebanese and Palestinian peoples.

Mohammadi said that regional countries hold the Zionist entity responsible for the ongoing bloodbath in Lebanon, and similar to the OIC role to end the genocide of Muslims in Bosnia, Muslim countries could coordinate efforts to resolve the crisis in Lebanon.

Syria: Iran's Velayati Discusses Lebanon With Russia's Posuvalyuk

JN2404131096 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1115 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Iranian Foreign Minister Dr. 'Ali Akbar Velayati met with Viktor Posuvalyuk, Russian deputy foreign minister, at the Iranian Embassy in Damascus this morning.

[Alexander Samirnov], press attache at the Russian Embassy in Damascus, said that Velayati and Posuvalyuk stressed the need to pool the efforts of all parties concerned with putting a quick end to the tragic incidents in southern Lebanon. They also asserted the importance of cooperation between Russia and Iran regarding international and regional causes. Discussions mainly dealt with the situation in Lebanon.

Syria: Radio Reports on al-Asad's 24 Apr Talks With Pakistan's Bhutto

BK2404121396 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1100 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, now in Damascus on a two-day official visit to Syria, has had another round of talks with President Hafiz al-Asad about the situation in Arab region and East Asia. She reiterated Pakistan's support to Syria in the search for a just and comprehensive peace to restore Golan Heights to the Syrian sovereignty. She also supported Lebanon in facing Israeli aggression. The prime minister pointed out that Pakistan highly values Syria's principled stand and its role under the leadership of President Hafiz al-Asad. President al-Asad spoke of his country's resolve to boost historical and traditional relationship between Syria and Pakistan.

Those present at the meeting included the Syrian prime minister, Mr. Mahmud al-Zu'bi; the foreign minister, Mr. Faruq al-Shar'; and the minister of state for foreign affairs, Mr. Nasir Qaddur.

In a wide-ranging interview with a Syrian daily, AL-BA'TH, the prime minister condemned Israeli aggression against Lebanon and expressed solidarity with the Arab world. She said Pakistan maintains good relations with Syria and desires to promote these ties in the years to come. She reiterated Pakistan's position on the struggle of Kashmiris against Indian atrocities and oppression. The prime minister spoke at length about the economic policies of her government and investment opportunities in Pakistan.

She also held a meeting with the Syrian grand mufti, Ahmad Kaftaru. She is having formal talks with the Syrian prime minister this afternoon.

Syria: Al-Shar' Receives Hizballah Delegation 24 Apr

JN2404190396 Damascus Syrian Arab Television Network in Arabic 1730 GMT 24 Apr 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' received a Hizballah Delegation, led by Shaykh Hasan Nasrallah, this morning. Discussions dealt with the Israeli aggression against Lebanon and efforts for a cease fire.

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Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Senator Qazi Arrives in Kabul, To Meet President Rabbani

BK2304034996 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 22 Apr 96 p 12

[Report by Zulfiqar Ali]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] PESHAWAR, April 21: Amir Jam'iyat-e Eslami and Senator Qazi Hussain Ahmad arrived in Kabul on Monday to hold talks with Afghan President Borhanoddin Rabbani and other leaders in order to chalk out a solution to the decade long civil war.

Before his departure to Afghan capital Kabul, Senator Qazi held four hours long meeting with Chief of Hezb-e Eslami Afghanistan, Golboddin Hekmatyar in Jalalabad, the capital of Nangarhar and discussed with him the overall situation in the war-ravaged country.

The Jam'iyat-e Eslami Amir was invited by the Hezb-e Eslami chief. The invitation was conveyed to the Jam'iyat-e Eslami leader through Jam'iyat-e Eslami Professor Mohammad Ibrahim, NWFP [Northwest Frontier Province] President of the Jam'iyat-e Eslami and Shabir Ahmed General Secretary who visited Jalalabad few days back.

Meanwhile, the Taleban have reportedly categorically rejected the US appeal to release the seven Russian hostages on humanitarian basis. The seven hostages were detained by the Taleban militia in Kandahar last year.

Afghanistan: Taleban Group Arrests 22 People in Herat

LD2404191196 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Taleban have rounded up 22 people from different parts of Herat and have taken them to the general prison of Herat. A reliable source told Radio Message that Taleban had resorted to arresting people in different parts of Herat and on 22 April they arrested 22 people. These people have been charged with fighting against the Taleban and setting off explosions in Herat. The source said that three explosion had occurred in Pakistan's consulate in the city since the Taleban captured Herat. After the explosions, the Taleban embarked on the persecution and arrest of these people.

Afghanistan: Taleban Leader Agrees to Kabul Pullback After Iran Talks

LD2404111896 Tehran IRNA in English 0816 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Mashhad, Khorasan Prov., April 24, IRNA — Governor of Herat, Maulavi Yar Mohammad, on Tuesday [23 April] praised Iran's attempts to end the civil war in Afghanistan and its humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people.

Yar Mohammad, one of the Taleban leaders, who arrived here Monday, termed his talks with Iranian officials as satisfactory.

Putting an end to the war in Kabul, as well as issues pertaining to border security and the return of Afghan refugees, were discussed by the two sides, he said, disclosing that some agreement has been reached.

Yar Mohammad said, "we have agreed to pull back our forces from Kabul and have asked the Islamic Republic to continue its mediation talks with different warring groups in the Afghan civil war through the formation of a commission."

"The Taleban favored the establishment of an Islamic government in Afghanistan wherein religious ulema, jihad commanders and heads of tribes play the major role," he said.

Talks were also held on the security of joint borders and it was decided that law enforcement forces of the two sides cooperate with each other to counter any factors causing insecurity.

Turning to Iran's concern over the activities of narcotics smugglers along the border, he said, "we gave assurances to prevent drug trafficking and even ban the cultivation of poppy in our territories."

During the talks, the Afghan delegation informed Iranian officials of their economic needs and called for the resumption of Iran's commercial exchanges in the southwestern provinces of Afghanistan.

Head of the Iranian side in the talks, Majid Nayyeri, said the delegation was informed about Tehran's concern over the war in Kabul and the hardship endured by people in the capital.

Referring to the Taleban's statements that it wanted Islam to prevail in Afghanistan, the group was asked to stop its barrage on Kabul and open the roads to allow foodstuff into the region, Nayyeri reported.

The delegation responded positively to Iran's request and accepted to withdraw its forces from around Kabul to Meydan Shahr and Lowgar.

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In turn, they called on Tehran to ask the Afghan Government not to occupy the areas evacuated by the Taleban.

As for the continuation of Iran's mediation efforts to solve the Afghan conflict via the formation of a commission to this end, Nayeri stated that the issue needs further discussion with the Taleban.

Voicing concern over narcotics trafficking at Iran's joint borders with Afghanistan that are under Taleban control, he said the Iranian side submitted documented evidence to the group's representatives and asked them to take major measures in this connection as a means of helping establish friendly ties with the Islamic Republic.

The status of Afghan immigrants and the treatment they get from the Taleban resulting in the escalation of migration to Iran, were among the issues [words indistinct] Nayyeri disclosed, adding that the group was asked to change its conduct.

Taleban leaders were urged to seriously enter into the peace process and stop from insisting that they would not establish peace prior to the capture of Kabul.

Nayyeri said that though the group had pre-conditions on the outset, they ultimately accepted to join the peace initiative.

Afghanistan: Government Forces Plan Offensive in Shahrak District

LD2404193196 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Reports reaching here from Kabul say that government forces disarmed a 20-strong Taleban group in Shahrak District, Ghowr Province last Sunday [21 April]. Another report says that the government has sent a large number of troops to Shahrak District and wants to mount a large offensive on the center of the district.

Afghanistan: Minister Sees Better Pakistan Ties, Welcomes U.S. Role

BK2404131996 Hong Kong AFP in English 1254 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, April 24 (AFP) — The troubled ties between the Afghan government and its eastern neighbour Pakistan are showing definite signs of warming, foreign minister Najibollah Lafra'i said Wednesday [24 April].

The apparent thaw means that the two sides are likely to hold face-to-face talks for the first time since the crisis between them culminated in the torching of Pakistan's embassy here seven months ago, he added.

"There are some signs of definite improvement in our relations with Pakistan," Lafra'i told AFP.

"There is even a possibility of direct talks between us and the Pakistani government on matters of mutual interest to us which I think is a very positive development," he added.

He said representatives of the two governments may meet in May during the summit of the regional economic co-operation group, ECO [Economic Cooperation Organization], to be held in Turkmenistan's capital Ashgabat.

Lafra'i, however, refused to give details of any signs of a warming of ties or to say whether the two sides had come to an agreement about any of the issues dividing them.

The signs of a thaw between the governments comes after months of bitter mutual accusations and denials and after the United States began moves to reconcile the two states, observers here said.

Relations touched rock-bottom in September when the Pakistani embassy here was burned by an angry mob amid allegations that Islamabad was militarily and financially aiding the Taleban militia besieging Kabul.

Pakistan has vehemently denied the charge, but since then virtually the only exchanges between the rival governments have been the trading of bitter recriminations.

Lafra'i said the thawing "should have come a long time ago," adding that "it was in the interest of both countries to liaise and co-operate with one another."

The minister's comments came just four days after US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs, Robin Raphel, visited Kabul and urged Afghanistan and Pakistan to settle their differences.

"The United States considers itself a friend of both Afghanistan and Pakistan and we certainly urge both Kabul and Islamabad to mend fences," she said.

In recent weeks there have been indications in Islamabad — which enjoys close ties with Washington — that Pakistan's attitude to the Kabul administration was softening.

Notably, its controversial plans to rebuild a road linking Pakistan and central Asia through Afghanistan without Kabul's consent have reportedly been put on the back burner.

Last week, a senior Pakistani official said Kabul's regrets over the embassy incident and its willingness to

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pay compensation almost satisfied Islamabad's demand for an apology.

Lafra'i said Kabul had no objection to the project in principle, but demanded that it be consulted before the plans went ahead.

"It would not make economic sense to either country to forget about the road. Our objections to it were based only on how the matter was handled," he said.

Lafra'i also welcomed the growing US interest in Afghanistan — illustrated by the recent visits of Raphel and Republican Senator Hank Brown — saying he hoped Washington would use its influence to stop foreign interference here.

"We are optimistic that the this interest will lead to greater American involvement in the peace process here," he said.

Afghanistan: Group Views Visit by U.S. Official as 'Direct Interference'

LD2404193096 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] On 22 April, the Afghan National Warriors group [as heard] held a meeting in the University Town in Peshawar and discussed the current situation in the country. A spokesman for the Warriors told a SHAHADAT newspaper correspondent that a statement was issued at the end of the meeting, which was attended by a large number of our compatriots, students, members of the Warriors group, and women's organizations. The statement says that the groups consider the visit of Robin Raphel, U.S. assistant secretary of state for South Asian affairs, to Afghanistan as direct interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. The statement says:

The National Warriors want the establishment of a strong central Islamic government chosen by the people. America sent Robin Raphel to Afghanistan to sabotage the Hezb-e Eslami-Jam'iyat-e Eslami talks. The statement also says that if America wants a restoration of peace in Afghanistan, it should first have replaced Mahmud Mestiri with another UN envoy to Afghanistan. We consider Robin Raphel's Afghan visit a special measure by America and strongly condemn it. We ask all jehadi leaders to resolve the Afghan problem through talks.

The statement adds: America wants to ignite another bloody war in Afghanistan. We ask all our mojahed compatriots to neutralize the U.S. plots and to hold hands in brotherhood.

India

India: Kashmir Chief Urges 'Greater Vigil' on Border for Elections

BK2504040896 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 25 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Jammu and Kashmir, all the ballot boxes to be used in the coming Lok Sabha elections have been given serial numbers of and code numbers to ensure free and fair polling. The state governor, Mr. K.V. Krishna Rao, has warned that any attempt to disrupt the elections will be dealt with firmly. He was addressing a high-level meeting at Srinagar yesterday to review the law and order situation and the prepoll arrangements. Mr. Rao directed the security forces rto mount a greater vigil along the border. He said Pakistan may try to push in militants to disrupt the elections.

India: Police Arrest 'Pak-Trained Kashmiri Militant' in Delhi

BK2504044096 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 25 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Delhi Police has arrested a Pak-trained Kashmiri militant owing an allegiance to the militant outfit, Hizbul Mujahideen. He was arrested from the Jama Masjid area of the old city in a joint operation by the Special Branch of the Delhi Police and Army Counterintelligence Unit. According to a release issued yesterday, the arrested militant revealed during the interrogation that he was trained at Muzaffarabad in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir and at Peshawar in handling AK-47, rocket launchers, hand grenades, and pistols. He was instigated to fight the Indian forces and sent back to India with a large number of arms, ammunition, and cash.

India: Rao Notes Absence of Provision for Presidential Rule

BK2504042696 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 1530 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Congress president says there is no provision for president's rule similar to Article 356 [of the Constitution] at the center [federal level]. Speaking at an election meeting at Bangalore, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao said that stability is a vital necessity for orderly and peaceful progress. The Congress will oppose the uniform civil code tooth and nail. He accused the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] of playing a political game in the name of a uniform civil code and in the absolution of the Minority Commission in Maharashtra. Mr. Narasimha Rao said reservation for women in the

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legislature and parliament through constitutional means will be brought about soon.

India: Article Condemns U.S. Proliferation Report

BK2504041496 Delhi THE HINDUSTAN TIMES in English 24 Apr 96 p 13

[Article by Rakshat Puri]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] THE Defence Secretary of the United States, William Perry, was reported last week to have released a paper on "Proliferation: Threat and Response". The paper also dealt with "Threat and Response" in South Asia. The burden was familiar. The bias in favour of the accepted nuclear powers was unconcealed. The US's "new" policy, the paper said, was to not only cap reduce and eliminate India's and Pakistan's nuclear and missile options but also eventually "to eliminate their capabilities to produce nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles."

The paper said in addition that risks to regional security and any development of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons in South Asia would endanger "broader US and international nonproliferation objectives." These include presumably the US presidency's gimmicks for domestic popularity in this election year, such as the "indefinite NPT [Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty]" and a CTBT [Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty] that leaves in place the monopoly of the accepted nuclear-weapons powers. But the nuclear programmes of India and Pakistan "serve as dangerous examples for nations in other regions."

Also, Indian and Pakistani slowness to adopt curbs on transfer of technology established by international control regimes "is reason for concern." There are too, "important security interests in South Asia" for the US, including enhanced "regional stability" to prevent "another Indo-Pakistan war". The impression left overall is that the US administration, with its European and Asian friends in tow, will do all it can to prevent open and declared war between India and Pakistan and at the same time do everything to preserve latent tension for manipulation in South Asia.

There may not result any significant difference to the power balance in South Asia from the US administration's decision to deliver the $368 million arms package due to Pakistan. But what about the equipment, including nuclear, that is being given to Pakistan from, say, China? By providing Pakistan with obviously India-targeted military and nuclear equipment while cooing peace in Indian ears, the regime in Beijing seems in effect consolidating South Asian divisions, perhaps in some ways furthering US interests. Is that why US reproof of China is tame?

Last month, Luo Bin, director of foreign affairs in China's Ministry of National Defence, stated in an interview with XINHUA that Beijing intended to strengthen military ties with Pakistan and Myanmar [Burma] among others. Nobody has mentioned added tension in South Asia. Not even the Americans who are terribly worried about instability in the region. The Chinese seem indeed to have the Americans and their friends in thrall — in a way that even the vast Chinese market does not quite explain.

Beijing has admitted selling ring magnets to Pakistan for enriching of uranium. It is known to have sold other nuclear equipment clandestinely to Pakistan. It has exported missiles to Pakistan. It has also used missiles freely in military exercises near Taiwan. But the American authorities have not so far dared to impose sanctions on China or to curb it in any clear way.

The US Secretary of State has been contemplating "narrow" curbs instead of sanctions required under the US Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act of 1994. Last week the US President vetoed a Bill passed by 52 to 44 votes in the Senate and by 226 to 172 votes in the House of Representatives demanding intensification of pressures on China and overhaul of diplomatic agencies.

Recently, when the American author Amy Tan was to speak at a banquet in Beijing for raising funds for Chinese orphans Chinese security personnel entered and prevented her from speaking. It didn't matter that the banquet was attended by the US ambassador — on the eve of departing for Washington to plead renewal of China's "most favoured nation" status. A few days later the Chinese Prime Minister who was visiting Paris and due to sign trade contracts insulted the French Prime Minister by refusing to attend his banquet until the French PM removed a harmless passage on human rights from his intended speech. The Prime Minister of France buckled. Would similar demarches be tolerated from Indian leaders if they had the guts and gumption to make them?

The fact is that the US administration and its allies are making monkeys of the Indians and Pakistanis. Instead of seeing through this and reacting jointly the Indians jump and the Pakistanis dutifully perform when the damru [drums] sounds — the damru being pronouncements such as Perry's stray remarks and lobbying among US and other politicians the divisive acts and intentions of Beijing, the forays of Robin Raphel, and so on. The heightened tension in South Asia is, first, welcome to "shops" in the world's Arms Bazaar. Secondly, tension in South Asia diverts attention and funds from socioeconomic development,

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keeping the countries poor and indebted and therefore easily commanded.

The context of SAARC [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation] provides for united socio-economic and cultural development. It can also provide for resolution of political issues such as J-K [Jammu & Kashmir] if the will is there. The leadership in India has not so far shown any courage or imagination in repairing and improving relations with Pakistan. Indeed, the inability of the Indian authorities to prevent the fire at Chrar-e-Sharif despite heavy troop deployment or to rescue hostages from Al-Faran after a six-month operation is intriguing to say the least. But the leaders in Pakistan win hands down over their Indian counterparts. They have not hesitated to become a stick in Chinese and other hands to perpetuate divisions in South Asia. It is an Open secret that organisations such as the ISI [Inter-Services Intelligence], the Taleban, some leading militant organisations in J-K etc. are not directed by the Bhutto government. It would be interesting to get details of the sources of their plans and funding — details which even Islamabad may not be in a position to provide.

India: BJP Leader Defends Pledge To Make Nuclear Bomb

BK2504093396 Hong Kong AFP in English 0824 GMT 25 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] New Delhi, April 25 (AFP) — Indian opposition leader and potential prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee on Thursday [25 April] defended his party's pledge to make an atomic bomb and attacked what he called "nuclear apartheid."

Vajpayee, whose rightwing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, Indian People's Party) is seen by opinion polls as the front-runner in general elections, said India needed a nuclear bomb for its "protection."

"Nothing wrong in that ...," he told the Foreign Correspondents' Club here. "Around India we see a stockpiling of nuclear weapons. China is a nuclear-weapon state."

"Pakistan has clandestinely been trying to have nuclear weapons," Vajpayee said, repeating a frequently-voiced Indian accusation that has been denied by Islamabad.

"So far the country has been committed to the peaceful use of nuclear energy. But the world has changed. There are many countries which are on the threshold of becoming nuclear powers," he said.

India exploded a nuclear device in 1974, but has since pledged to harness nuclear power exclusively for meeting its energy needs.

The BJP, in its election manifesto, has vowed to exercise the option of making a nuclear bomb should it take power in parliamentary elections starting Saturday.

India is not a signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which it says discriminates between the nuclear haves and the have-nots.

"Talks are going on in Geneva without a firm commitment on the part of the nuclear weapon states that they will reduce and destroy all their nuclear weapons within a particular timeframe," Vajpayee said.

"We believe in a nuclear weapons-free world. But we don't accept nuclear apartheid," he said.

Vajpayee, who has been projected by his party as a prime minister-in-waiting, did not answer directly when asked whether China posed a nuclear threat to India.

"I would like my country to be prepared for any eventuality, not to depend on the intentions of other countries," he said.

India and China have, in recent years, moved to improve relations, putting on ice a thorny border dispute that took them to war in 1962. India and Pakistan have fought three wars since independence from British colonial rule in 1947.

Two of the three Indo-Pakistani wars have been fought over Kashmir, the main bone of contention between the South Asian rivals.

Vajpayee, considered as a moderate voice in the hardline BJP, said India under a BJP government would pursue @friendly relations" with all neighbouring countries.

"India will not behave like a big brother through we are big in size," he said, adding: "Our neighbouring countries should not have any apprehension on that ground."

"Our relations will be based on equality and also on reciprocity," he said.

The opposition leader said India enjoyed its best relations with neighbours when a non-Congress party government, in which he was the foreign minister, was in power in 1977-79.

Vajpayee said he intended to send a "message of goodwill" to Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto if he became prime minister.

"But it requires two to cooperate," he stressed.

He accused Pakistan of sending armed infiltrators into Indian Kashmir, where security forces are battling a Moslem separatist movement that New Delhi charges is fuelled by Pakistani backing.

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"Terrorism has to be put down with a heavy hand," he said, but declared himself in support of talks with Moslem separatists to solve the Kashmir conflict.

India: Article Views Parties' Positions on CTBT

BK2504091796 Delhi THE PIONEER in English 24 Apr 96 p 10

[Article by Brahma Chellaney]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] If proof was needed of the bipartisan consensus on the nuclear test ban issue, it is there in the election manifestos of the major parties. The Comprehensive Test Ban (CTB) as proposed by states shielded by a nuclear arsenal or umbrella has been rejected unequivocally by the main opposition parties. The BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] endorses the present Indian policy by saying a test ban will make sense only if it is tied to a binding disarmament timetable. The Janata Dal spurns the CTB as an 'adjunct' of the discriminatory Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The CPI-M [Communist Party of India (Marxist)] also jeers at the test ban by saying it will resist pressure from the United States to "impose its NPT and CTB".

The Congress makes no direct mention of the test-ban issue since its manifesto largely narrates its five-year rule's "accomplishments". But the party's CTB posture is reflected in the Government's tough, unambiguous policy on the subject, enunciated by the Prime Minister, Mr P.V Narasimha Rao, himself. As the Foreign Minister, Mr Pranab Mukherjee, said after the Congress manifesto's release, the test ban "cannot be an end in itself, and must be linked to nuclear disarmament".

The Rao Government has set a clear CTB policy, and the positions laid out by the major opposition parties provide assurance that, whatever the shape of the successor Government, India will not swerve from the present path. This is the first time the leading opposition groups have clarified where they stand on a subject that is inseparably tied to the future of India's nuclear option and its disarmament policy.

The emergence of a CTB-related national accord in a short span of time is a remarkable achievement in a country where consensus has continued to elude a number of other important issues. Consensus, of course, cannot prejudge dissent, especially in large and varied India which has served as a happy hunting ground for agencies and individuals pushing alien interests.

The dissenters fall largely in two categories. Those who want India to embrace a CTB, surrender its nuclear option and rely on high-cost conventional arms imports; and the more wily ones who clothe their arguments in nationalistic or anti-imperialistic language and urge India to facilitate the conclusion of a flawed CTB by walking out of the Geneva negotiations, and exercise "restraint" on its security choices even though the country has gagged itself for years. Both sets of dissenters wish to keep the 925 million Indians defenceless against weapons of mass destruction, but public opinion demands building of effective defences to ensure national independence and survival.

The Bottomline

The all-party concordance means that India will continue to play role at the 37-nation Conference on Disarmamanet (CD) and attempt to frustrate big-power efforts to create a substandard, nonproliferation-devoted treaty sheltering some forms of weapons-related testing. There is strong bipartisan support that India should doggedly push its proposal to fasten the CTB to disarmament and yank out the key loopholes. The outcome of the national elections thus cannot alter the Indian negotiating strategy, piloted by two of our most gifted diplomats the Foreign Secretary, Mr Salman Haidar and the Geneva-based Ambassador, Ms Arundhuti Ghosh. But the new Government is bound to come under immediate Western pressure to allow a consensus to emerge at Geneva by not pressing the Indian proposals.

The best way to rebuff such pressure would be for India to listen to the reasoning of all the nations whose representatives would be lining up to meet our officials, but hang tough in the negotiations, which are scheduled to resume on May 6 much before a new Government would be appointed. Attempts at collective bullying, such as common demarches by the G-7 states, should be firmly snubbed. Politeness should not be allowed to be misconstrued as meekness or weakness. While India should be open to all reasonable compromises, the bottom line is that it cannot allow a treaty to emerge that is inimical to its vital interests.

By the time the new Government is properly constituted and comes to grip with the country's nuclear imperatives, less than four weeks would be left in the critical CD session that could determine whether there will be a CTB in 1996 or not. The new Government cannot allow itself to be hustled into anything and would need ample time to carefully weigh the ramifications of any deviation from existing policy.

It is safe to assume that given the bipartisan strength of its present CTB policy and a sluggish decision-making process, India is unlikely to make any major departure from its present posture during the upcoming CD session. If a CTB agreement eludes the session before it concludes on June 28, it could unravel the United States led strategy.

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The Indian Definition

Prospects of reaching an accord by then and opening the treaty for signature in September "do not look good right now", as acknowledged by the United States. The earlier American confidence of steam-rolling all opposition and achieving an NPT extension style triumph has given way to a sense of despair. The US President, Mr Bill Clinton, has indicated American diplomatic efforts would focus on the two countries that hold the key to a CTB, India and China. Many of the treaty's major provisions remain unresolved and, despite prolonged negotiations, "by and large the same issues are still on the table", according to the Dutch Ambassador, Mr Jaap Ramaker, Chairman of the CD's Nuclear Test Ban Committee.

The continuing logjam and misgivings expressed by India and others prompted Mr Ramaker in late March to defer the idea of substituting the "rolling text" of a draft CTB with his own "clean text". Instead, he issued a 135-page "working paper" focusing attention on the main areas of disagreement. Mr Ramaker now intends to release the "clean text" in the course of the new CD session, provided US diplomacy can help temper Indian and Chinese concerns. The Ramaker Draft, like the Dunkel Draft in the GATT negotiations, will seek to ram through a loopholes-marred Western version by putting the talks on a fast track.

India has to resolutely thwarted efforts to push through an impaired text allowing the nuclear powers to offset and evade the treaty's intended restrictive effects. The G-7 success over the weekend in persuading Russia to accept the loose Australian definition of the treaty scope has only reinforced the need for India to insist on its tightly written proposal on the subject.

The Indian definition, revised in late March to exclude civil nuclear activity, seeks a true zero-yield test ban by banning any release of nuclear energy in weapons-related tests or explosions. As Mr Salman Haidar has pointed out, "It would surely be unacceptable if after almost four decades of effort we achieved a treaty which left open a route to improve or upgrade nuclear weapons or to develop and refine designs for new weapons".

India: Commentary Welcomes John Major's Remarks on Kashmir

BK2504073296 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 25 Apr 96

[Commentary by Samuel Ved]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] There is certainly growing awareness among European countries that the root cause of disturbed conditions in Jammu and Kashmir is external (?mixtures). The British prime minister, Mr. John Major, told the House of Commons that external help to militants has been responsible for the escalation of violence in the state. He said the problem can be resolved if there is genuine political process.

What Mr. Major said has been said a number of times by the Indian Government. It has been India's argument that there is no problem in Kashmir if there is no external prompting and that means Pakistan's involvement in the state. The world has taker some time to accept this argument. Perhaps India's case is better understood today than before because the United States and the European countries have begun to realize that they too are or can be the targets of the kind of religion-based terrorism that India has been facing ever since the Afghan war ended.

Although the United States has so far refused to list Pakistan among the countries, which support transborder terrorism, it is fully aware that Islamabad has become a breeding ground for militarized fundamentalism, and if we carefully study Pakistan's internal politics we will not take long to realize that exporting terrorism has become an important part of the polity of major political parties in that country. Within the country, the ruling party and the opposition try to deal with each other through violent means. Opposition leaders for some good reasons accuse the government of Ms. Benazir Bhutto of resorting to state terrorism to crush the opposition, but the government too has begun to brand the opposition as terrorists. Pakistan's support to terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir and its efforts to acquire weapons of mass destruction are the extension of this attitude toward its opponents.

Reports emanating from the West say that Pakistan has developed nuclear bombs. Pakistan on the other hand indirectly confirms this when it says that its nuclear problem is related to the Kashmir problem. The prime minister of occupied Kashmir, Sardar Abdul Qayyum, has said a number of times that there could be a nuclear war over Kashmir. That is another kind of terrorist strategy in relation to Kashmir, and now a report says that Italian police have seized five containers of equipment from a ship in Naples, which were going to Pakistan. This equipment is used for building chemical weapons. This news put out by the state television in Rome indicates to what extent Pakistan can go in its quest for devastating weapons.

The Simla Agreement has committed India and Pakistan to holding talks for resolving the Kashmir issue. India has been advocating that, and now Mr. Major has also made the same suggestion.

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Iran

Iran: Mojahedin-e Khalq Claims Responsibility for Esfahan Attack

LD2404182896 Tehran IRNA in English 1759 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Ilam, April 24, IRNA — A radio belonging to the terrorist Mojahedin-e Khalq organization (MKO) monitored here on Tuesday [23 April] night, claimed responsibility for the attack on the Baqer al-'Ulum cultural center in Esfahan. The Iraqi-based radio station said the MKO agents carried out the attack at midnight on April 13.

The attackers set afire the cultural-scientific center with Molotov cocktail destroying books and causing damage to the building. The MKO terrorists, backed by certain western countries, have indulged in numerous terrorist attacks on cultural, scientific and religious centers in Iran. The grouplet, which is based in Iraq, has recently embarked on military provocations on Iranian western border areas and staged military maneuver.

Iran: Editorial Criticizes BBC Program on Iran

LD2004113796 Tehran RESALAT in Persian 13 Apr 96 pp 1, 16

[Editorial by Mohammed Kazem Anbarlu'i: "A Breeze Over Mount Damavand"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Yesterday, delivering Tehran Friday prayer sermons, the president offered a clear view of the country's economic situation and what has been done so far. [passage omitted]

High prices and inflation are the realities of our society. If people are not made aware of the causes of such problems, they cannot help the government overcome them. If the lack of discipline, which is related to the strong fluctuation in prices, — and there is no economic justification for high prices — is not severely dealt with, then the enemy will use it as a pretext to deal political blows against the revolution.

It is precisely for this reason that plots hatched by world powers, the world-devouring America in particular, against the blessed system of the Islamic Republic are economic in nature. If the American senators' hue and cry at the U.S. Senate calling for sanctions against the Islamic Republic and their shameless instructions to the big companies asking them to boycott Iran economically have not achieved anything yet, it is because currently the country is advancing toward progress and development on the basis of adroit planning and proper assessment of resources. The president described the plots hatched abroad against the system as an ineffectual breeze over Mount Damavand. This is a very interesting interpretation. [passage omitted]

A while ago the government-owned BBC television stage-managed a ridiculous show on the situation in Iran. It showed a man who was most angry about the situation in Iran. The interview was said to have taken place under a paraffin lamp and the program presenter quoted the interviewee as saying that he had to suffer a few hours of blackouts every day! The BBC tells such a ridiculous lie at a time when the country is exporting electricity to neighboring countries and it has been years since we have had any blackout in any town.

Unfortunately, in this program, the state-owned BBC radio [as published] has taken advantage of an interview with a person whose name is among the [Majles election] candidates from Tehran constituency [footnote gives candidate's name as Morteza Alviri].

The message that the enemy had prepared in this program was the people have become tired of the revolution and women are campaigning to rid themselves of Islamic dress. A disgraced writer, in an interview with this satanic media, had said: "I am not living comfortably in this society" [footnote gives writer's name as Abbas Ma'rufi].

Also a so-called intellectual [footnote gives name as Habibollah Payman], claiming to be an anti-imperialist, in an interview with this imperialist media has said what they wanted to hear: There is no freedom, the clergy has not been successful and... [ellipsis as published] These are remarks for which the BBC has rewarded him with the title of: a liberal Muslim intellectual.

That esteemed candidate [Alviri], in this program — which was made by the British producer, His Excellency Phil Rees — had said: "Any society that deals with such issues narrow-mindedly is doomed to fail." He has also said: "The future belongs to those who do away with restrictions." [Footnote mentions that Morteza Alviri has already given an explanation about his interview with the BBC in an article in the newspaper HAMSHAHRI, published on 10 April 1996. It says that the explanation is not sufficient and that Alviri should explain the matter further.]

Are we really narrow-minded? Are there any restrictions in our society? Is the implementation of divine restrictions to limit? Does departing from divine guardianship and committing the most obscene acts in Western societies mean being free and open?

Certainly that is not what the interviewee [Alviri] meant; but the enemy has exploited it to its own advantage! [passage omitted]

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In any case, such propaganda and dreadful enemy plots coming into contact with the strong wave of millions of brave Muslims, as the president put it, would feel like a breeze over Mount Damavand. After the passage of 17 years, we are still steadfast and have no doubt about where we are going.

Iran: Armenians Stage Anti-Turkish Demonstrations in Tehran

TA2404162396 Ankara TRT Television Network in Turkish 1500 GMT 24 Apr 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] A group of Armenians threw paint at the Turkish Embassy in Tehran today using the pretext of the anniversary of the so-called Armenian massacre. According to ANATOLIA AGENCY, the Armenians also staged anti-Turkish demonstrations in various parts of Tehran. It was reported that the Iranian Interior Ministry, however, did not allow the Armenians to march to the Turkish Embassy, as they had planned.

Iran: Regional Ramifications of Israeli-Turkish Accord Discussed

NC2304170396 Mashhad KHORASAN in Persian 13 Apr 96 pp 1, 11

[Political commentary: "The Bonding of the Laicists and the Turks"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The signing of an accord for military cooperation between Turkey and the Zionist regime last week has been widely reflected in the regional news media and has aroused the sensitivities of Iran, Syria, Lebanon, and even of Egypt and the Arab League.

The accord, signed last Esfand [20 February-20 March] between the first deputy chief of Staff of the Turkish Armed Forces and the Israeli defense minister, stipulates that Israeli warplanes can use Turkish airspace for their training flights. But some political circles think the accord is much more extensive and will incorporate air and military support in emergency and war situations.

People in the region reacted harshly to the news and there was widespread opposition in Turkey—in particular among its Muslim people and the Islamist Welfare Party—as well as in Syria, Iran, Egypt, and Lebanon. Turkish Defense Minister Oltan Sungurlu has denied the report and the Turkish deputy foreign minister, during his meeting with Foreign Minister Dr. Velayati, described it as baseless. But the irrefutable facts and figures bear evidence to the contrary and prove the veracity of the report.

The Turkish ambassador in Tel Aviv, Ozener Barlas, declared that the accord is not as important as the media say, but is merely an accord between the armies of the two countries, concerning permission for each country's warplanes to use the other's airspace for training purposes!

But the Welfare Party believes such an accord should first be approved in the Turkish Parliament. Most interesting in all this is that the agreement was signed in Esfand, when there was no legal government in control in Turkey—after Ciller resigned and before Yilmaz formed a government. So its validity is also questionable.

The expression "training flights" is quite misleading, since, during the Persian Gulf war, U.S. warplanes flew from the Incirlik base and bombed northern Iraq on the basis of a similar accord. Ten years ago, in similar operations, the Americans used the Ciligi [as published] airbase near Izmir to carry out air raids against Libya. On this basis it appears that the pact was signed for similar objectives.

The laicist regime at the helm in Turkey has an unbreakable bond with Zionism. Turkish politicians admit that this bond started 50 years ago. The close strategic relations of these two regimes were reinforced by Turkish President Suleyman Demirel's Esfand visit to Israel. Such issues cannot be considered unexpected.

Some political analysts also think that Turkey needs Israeli support [preceding word in English] for membership of the European Union [EU] and that by granting such privileges it expects to reap fringe benefits. This accord will certainly have substantial fallout and reverberate extensively in Turkey's political relations with its Eastern and Southern neighbors.

Turkey should realize that fomenting insecurity and tension in the region benefits no country. The Islamic Republic of Iran cannot accept a country nearby permitting the Zionist regime's armed forces to carry out military exercises and maneuvers. To preserve its international position and to strengthen its economic foundations, Ankara is in dire need of international cooperation with regional countries. Naturally, such an accord would be a basic obstacle in its path. The discovery of an extensive Turkish espionage network in Iran and news of the activities of counter-revolutionary groups in Turkey are among the various issues that will directly affect bilateral relations with Turkey.

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Iran: Turkish Militant Cagirici's Letter to Daily AKIS Viewed

NC2404164596 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Turkish 1630 GMT 23 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Irfan Cagirici, who has been accused of assassinating daily MILLIYET's columnist Cetin Emec, has disclosed that he signed a confession statement under police pressure that revealed the fact that several officials of the Iranian Embassy in Ankara and the Iranian Consulate General in Istanbul were involved in the assassination are unfounded.

The daily AKIS published a letter Cagirici sent to the newspaper from his prison cell today. It said that Cagirici was forced to sign the so-called confession when the police officials tortured his wife right in front of him. A number of newspapers published several sections of the confession that also included accusations against the Iranian Embassy officials some time ago. The letter said that the police and the newspapers planned to use the so-called revelations to deal a blow on the Islamic movement and draw up designs against the Muslim people and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Iran: Commentary Discusses Turkish Coverage of Militant's Letter

NC2404170496 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Turkish 1630 GMT 23 Apr 96

[Unattributed commentary: "Turkish Media Plans Against Iran Exposed"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Influential newspapers in Turkey, mainly HURRIYET, SABAH, and MILLIYET, reported the arrest of Irfan Cagirici, the murderer of journalist Cetin Emec, in bold print some time ago. They later published the scenarios that were carefully drawn up by the police. They were based on Cagirici's so-called revelations.

The scenarios were carefully drawn up in great detail. So it was almost impossible for those who were unaware of the situation and the skill of the police and the media in drawing up plans not to be influenced by the so-called revelations.

The scenario writers based their arguments on Irfan Cagirici's visit to Iran over 10 years ago. They tried to make up convincing stories. They wanted to brainwash the Turkish people and create a rift between Turkey and Iran. They also wanted to find a satanic way to provoke the peoples of the two countries, which have lived in peace for nearly 300 years.

Similar allegations and unfounded claims should be investigated. But the people do not usually do this. So the unfounded scenarios remain effective. One of the Koranic chapters urges the Muslims: Faithful people, accept no information that is conveyed to you by a wicked person without investigating it. Otherwise, you will be doing someone an injustice.

So we leave it to the people to decide the nature of those who have made unfounded claims against Iran, claims that have harmed the Islamic religion and the Muslims. The argument over Irfan Cagirici's revelations has even affected relations between Iran and Turkey.

No legal proceedings have been brought against Cagirici and the conditions under which he has been interrogated have not been established thus far.

The daily AKIS has published the letter he sent to the newspaper from his prison. It revealed the secret forces that have drawn up a plan against Iran. It also revealed the disgusting objective behind it. Cagirici dissociated himself from claims that Iranian officials have been involved in terrorist activities and assassinations in Turkey, claims that have been made by the newspapers that are controlled by the capitalist circles and other forces. He said he had been forced to sign the so-called confession in a torture chamber and noted that the scenario is a plan against the Islamic movement in Turkey.

This is not surprising, because the Zionists believe their existence depends on continuing insecurity and hostility in the Middle East. So we urge Turkish officials, at least, to be more careful and avoid being misled by the Zionists and international centers of conspiracy. Iran, drawing strength from its faith, has calmly dealt with international conspiracies and maintained its direction for 17 years.

Iran: Paper Analyzes Roots of Lebanon Crisis

LD2104191096 Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 15 Apr 96 p 2

[From the "Note of the Day" column by Yunes Shokrkhah: "Lebanon: The Roots of the Catastrophe"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Transparent sophistry is the most apt interpretation for the bloodbath which Israel has created in Lebanon.

Why does Israel embark on a massacre at the height of the debate about Middle East peace?

That is the principal question to be asked about the bloody event in Lebanon. And so far there have been two answers to that:

1. Hizballah attacks against northern Israel are terrorist acts.

2. 29 May elections in Israel.

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Those two answers are mainly offered by America, the Zionist regime, and the Western media.

As for the first: The Lebanese Hizballah is fighting against occupation. Southern Lebanon has been under Israeli occupation for more than a decade. Tel Aviv calls this occupied territory a security zone and from there and along with its mercenaries (Antoine Lahd's forces) embarks on the slaughter of the Lebanese. Hizballah is not a terrorist organization; it is conducting a popular struggle to liberate its land. What sort of an organization can have a representative in the Lebanese parliament? Does that not indicate the popularity among the Lebanese of a popular struggle?

Then the Hizballah struggle is not merely a terrorist concept but a powerful struggle against the terrorist logic of the Zionists. That struggle is being carried out against the biggest arsenal in the region and the most illegal of entities in the Middle East. The White House is backing Israel on the one side and on the other, the Lebanese people stand by Hizballah and are seeking to cleanse their land of the filthiest enemy of the Muslims. Lebanon is a capsule for a world crisis and the crystallization of an Islamic awakening against domination. What goes on in Lebanon is not different in nature from what goes on between the Serbs and Muslims in the heart of Europe. The Serbs and the Zionists are two sides of the same coin and in both cases Washington is looming in the shadows.

As for the second answer: Although Shim'on Peres is considered to be one of the main pillars of intimidation and terrorism, he lacks the image of a militarist. That is why it is said that he needs a winning military card for the elections in Israel. That is a big lie. The objective for raising that point is to turn the present Israeli aggression into a tactical and limited operation. The Zionist regime's onslaught stems from its terrorist nature. It is not merely tactical, but tells of a long-standing strategic process. Before attacking Lebanon, the Zionists surrounded the Gaza Strip and the West Bank and dozens of Palestinians have so far lost their lives in that siege.

Both that siege and the brutal attack against Lebanon have faced the silence of the Arab leaders. The truth of the matter is this:

—The Israelis undoubtedly got the licence to attack from the Sharm al-Shaykh conference. The present silence by the Arab leaders is the result of that disgraceful gathering.

—Not only are the Arab leaders keeping silent but also some of them consider Hizballah to be the main factor in bringing about the present situation.

—America's blatant support for Israel in this aggression comes under conditions where earlier the U.S. special envoy had paid a visit to the region and Peres had been to the southern Persian Gulf.

—Unfortunately the Damascus-Tel Aviv talks, held in a Washington suburb, have relatively reinforced Israeli's mistaken belief that the potential for confrontation in the region has been reduced.

—In this transparent sophistry, one side — that is, the Zionist regime — has violated the highest number of UN resolutions and U.S. support has deepened the catastrophe.

—The onslaught by this aggressor regime has held a full-length mirror in front of Arab leaders. Despite its negotiations with those leaders, Tel Aviv has well realized that even written undertakings by those Arab leaders will not change the reality of events. Israel has realized that not only are those compromising leaders not the barometers for this feverish region, they have no vestige of power either. It is on that score, therefore, that Israel has attacked the principal focal points of power, that is, the people of the region.

—Moreover, the Zionist regime is seeking to resume its incomplete talks with Syria — suspended until the Israeli elections are over — from a position of power.

The Israelis — these Middle Eastern Serbs — because of being trapped in the labyrinth of military solutions, or rather, what they call the iron-fist and scorched-earth policies, fail to understand the point that these measure lead to accumulated revolutionary grudges. America and Israel mistakenly assess that this aggression will strengthen security. The aggression will push the Washington and Israel vulnerability factor to the international level and put retaliatory operations at the top of the revolutionary forces' considerations. To put it more clearly, Israel's aggression against Lebanon will complement the intifadah and fuse the energies of Lebanon and Palestine. In that case, the intifadah will no longer be condemned to struggle within the framework of the occupied territories and will find the capability to multiply its operational cells rapidly at the international level.

Iran: Paper Assesses Conflicting Forces in Lebanon

LD2004164796 Tehran AKHBAR in Persian 17 Apr 96 p 2

[Editorial: "Lebanon, a Land of Conflicts"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The onslaught of the Zionists on Lebanon has led to some noteworthy consequences. First there is the silence of Syria and the flexibility shown by [Lebanese Prime Minister] Rafiq al-Hariri,

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then there are the French diplomatic efforts, and finally we witness the resistance of Hizballah.

Syria prefers to avoid a military confrontation with Israel. [Syrian President Hafiz] al-Asad knows that the common political maneuvers during the Cold War era, when he could bank on Soviet support, are no longer possible and feasible. Moreover, Damascus considers the Golan's return as something that has already been accomplished, and is therefore only pushing for the determination of its future role in that area. At the same time, Syria knows that it has a limited time to complete this task. The visit by Shim'on Peres to the Persian Gulf has disturbed the minds of the Syrians who have apparently realized that the Israeli pressures on the region are likely to increase further and further.

On this basis, al-Hariri is not doing much except conducting diplomatic negotiations and trying to gather support for an end to pressures by Israel. He is pleased with the Hizballah resistance, since it is the combatants of this group who are in fact defending the country in the absence the Lebanese army. However, he is pondering the future of the confrontation; a future in which Hizballah might want to play a role within the Lebanese power structure. Today, they lack such a role and whatever was there to share has gone to the Amal Movement of Nabih Birri. Therefore, all of al-Hariri's dreams will come true if Hizballah retreats and the international pressures succeed in forcing Israel to halt its operations.

Amid all this, France has assumed the role of Europe's representative. This is a difficult role for [French President Jacques] Chirac. He can neither afford to upset America nor stop his diplomatic efforts. Chirac wants to make Peres understand that if he leaves Lebanon, France can force al-Hariri to distance Lebanon from Syria and make al-Asad feel that once again he is lonely and single-handed in the talks with Israel. If this plan succeeds, then France can consolidate a foothold in the Middle East and find itself a new regional friend, while the fate of Iraq still remains in limbo.

However, the main focus of all analyses is Hizballah's resistance, which, according to military and political analysts, should not last much longer.

Resistance against a brutal and well-equipped military force is not a simple task. Even if Israeli forces were to advance as far as Beirut itself, the security of Israel would be a meaningless concept and all the plans formulated by Peres would be rendered futile, if Hizballah was still able to fire even one single missile at the occupied territories.

Hizballah enjoys popular support. However, politically it is on its own. Even many political circles of Lebanon have chosen silence, believing that nothing can be done.

If the Israeli soldiers have come to Lebanon for a one-day triumphant war, then they are certainly grounded now. If they have come to fight until the total annihilation of Hizballah, then they should certainly take the threats of the Muslims very seriously.

It seems that events in Lebanon will throw light on the future of many regional developments. This is particularly salient given the fact that Peres hopes to use the current events to make a case against some regional countries, including Iran and Syria, in a bid to convince the public opinion of the world in general, and of Europe in particular.

Iran: SALAM Readers Express Opinions About Lebanon

LD2004172696 Tehran SALAM in Persian 17 Apr 96 p 3

[From the "Hello, SALAM" column]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] CALLER: I would like to ask the Foreign Affairs Ministry to appoint 'Ali Akbar Mohtashemi as the Islamic Republic of Iran's ambassador in Lebanon, so as to help coordinate the defense of the oppressed Muslims of Lebanon. This is called active diplomacy, in case the Foreign Ministry did not know.

CALLER: In response to the bombardment of civilian areas in Lebanon, I am prepared — as a Muslim human being — to carry out martyrdom-seeking operations in any place that the Lebanese Hizballah requires. Please publish my message so that these dear ones do not feel that they are all on their own in this world. [passage omitted]

CALLER: I am calling from Qa'em-Shahr. Why did the Majma'e Rowhaniyun-e Mobarez [Militant Clerics Society, MRM] withdraw from the elections and not introduce any candidates? Whose interests would be served if the situation in the country were to deteriorate; Islam or that of the enemies of Islam?

SALAM: You can be confident that if the MRM had entered the race, their election rivals would have created a political atmosphere much worse than what you see today.

CALLER: The two strong filters of the Guardian Council and the supervisory council have rejected nearly all of the candidates who opposed them. So, having done this, why will they not allow the people to determine which of the remaining candidates should be elected

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to the Majles? Our dear Imam [Khomeyni] has said: "The main criterion is the people's vote." This means that our people enjoy enough maturity to select suitable candidates.

On the eve of the second round of voting, the Voice and Vision of the Islamic Republic of Iran constantly urges the nation to refrain from voting for the liberals. I want to know: Who are the liberals? Are there still some liberals among the contesting candidates? If so, why is it that their suitability was not rejected, in the same way that the Iran Freedom Movement candidates were rejected? And if there are no liberals around, then why all the propaganda? Can one deduce that the Guardian Council has in fact approved some liberal candidates?

SALAM: A similar question was put forward during the fourth Majles elections. The real question, however, is that if the filters of the executive and supervisory councils and ultimately the Guardian Council are not enough, and our people — benefitting from the guidelines of the esteemed leader and the great Imam and other officials — should at the end of the day cast their votes to determine who should be elected and who should not, then is it not better for the Guardian Council to intervene in the process of approving or rejecting candidates only when some recognized and proven offenses and crimes are involved? [sentence as published]

However, if the filters envisaged by the law are sufficient, surely then some groups and candidates should not be subjected to an extensive campaign of adverse propaganda half-way through the election process.

These days, on the eve of the second round of elections, all the official and unofficial media of our country have been mobilized in the service of a particular group. This is so blatant that nobody can entertain any doubt about what group these media support or oppose. It is obvious that such an attitude only serves to mar the election process. [passage omitted]

Iran: Paper Describes Aims of Islamic Resistance in Lebanon

LD2104214896 Tehran RESALAT in Persian 16 Apr 96 p 20

["Political commentary": "Bastions of Resistance Become Stronger"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The tactic of advancing step-by-step has been one of the methods within the overall strategy of the regime occupying Jerusalem, towards the usurpation of territories belonging to Muslims, from the start of the rule of the Zionists in occupied Palestine. At every stage of this step-by-step program, parts of the territories belonging to Palestinians have come under the rule of that regime by various methods.

The Sharm al-Shaykh conference was one of the other diplomatic methods used by the usurpers of Jerusalem to silence the world's governments and, especially, Arab rulers, in the face of that regime's future acts of aggression. Only a few weeks after the antiterrorist propaganda commotion of that conference, the roar of the Zionist regime's artillery, helicopters and aircraft have created a crisis in the calm climate of Lebanon. This kind of impudence has no other source than the success of that regime's rulers in the course of the diplomatic small talk at the recent meetings in Egypt and the United States, and the shuttle diplomacy with Arab countries.

The aim of this new attack is to consolidate a 14-year long presence in over 850 square km of Lebanese territory and to lay the groundwork for the usurpation of new territory in that region. The people of those towns have been massacred in shelling and missile attacks and many are being forced to flee their homes and homeland as a result of the spreading of terror and fear. In this way, after a while, when these territories have been completely depopulated, the next step, that is, the capture of those territories, will be undertaken. Even if this occupation stops at boosting the power of small talk "at the peace negotiations", the Zionists never withdraw from any territory without obtaining political concessions.

The other aim of this crime is to break any kind of resistance to the excessive demands of international Zionism in the region.

Lebanon's Hizballah and Islamic resistance, which have consistently insisted on their just stance of wishing to take back the occupied parts of southern Lebanon, have robbed the occupiers of sleep with scant weapons. And, despite the wide-ranging efforts of global arrogance to destroy them, they have been able to withstand advanced and sophisticated Western weaponry, as well as its organized terrorism, and have continued to be a thorn in its flesh.

Finally, the point that has been falsely suggested to international public opinion by Western propaganda regarding a link between this tragic massacre and the forthcoming elections in the occupied territories: Essentially, the nature of the ruling factions in the United States and the occupied territories is the same, and the only difference between them is differences in the methods of pillaging—since they adopt different methods according to the exigencies of the moment. Otherwise, prime ministers from the Likud and Labor parties both have the same aim as far as the wronged

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people of Palestine and Lebanon are concerned, that is, the destruction of the Islamic resistance.

This time, too, their stone will miss its target. The attacks of the Zionist regime will give new life to the idea of resistance and will strengthen the bastions of defense even further. It has been made clear to international public opinion once again who the aggressor is. Any operation by Hizballah takes place in the framework of the right to self-defense and for the attainment of just rights, and justice always wins.

Iran: EU Stance Regarding Events in Lebanon Viewed

LD2304170396 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1002 GMT 23 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Yesterday the EU reviewed the outcome of the trip made by its delegation to Tehran and emphasized the continuation of relations and talks with the Islamic Republic of Iran. [passage omitted]

In the talks in Tehran, the Islamic Republic of Iran clearly stressed its stand vis-a-vis the expansionist and aggressive objectives of the Zionist regime and the violation of the inalienable and undeniable rights of the Muslim people of the occupied territories. It stressed the point that past experiences had shown that the so-called process of peace was really an organized and structured process of repression which contravenes all humanitarian, legal, and international principles.

The most outstanding example of the correctness of Iran's stance is evident right now in Lebanon where the Zionist regime has deployed its invading armed forces to target the southern regions of that country by air, land, and sea for the past two weeks. Half a million people have lost their homes and the majority of the victims of this aggression have been civilians, women, and children. Of course, the Zionist regime is by nature aggressive, but the current situation in Lebanon has gone beyond a mere military aggression and Zionist soldiers are perpetrating war crimes and genocide. In the attack against Lebanon, the Zionist regime has been inspired by Serbian crimes in Bosnia and has essentially turned people and civilian sites into war targets.

Unfortunately, a large number of countries belonging to the EU, especially Britain, have been content to follow the inhuman and illegal intentions of America and Israel. Yet, one would have expected that after all the talk about human rights and peace, the EU would have at least adopted a fairer stance. If what has taken place in Lebanon were to have happened elsewhere in the world, the EU would have cut off its aid and military equipment to the hostile country; whereas, immediately after Israel's attack on Lebanon, the British defense minister was welcoming the Israeli defense minister to London.

Political analysts believe America's support for the attacks on Lebanon, the silence maintained by the United Nations and by the UN secretary general, and the fact that the tragedies in Lebanon have been ignored by the EU, imply that the legitimate rights of defense of the victims of this aggression have been taken away from them. This method has already been tested during the imposed war and also in the tragedies witnessed in Bosnia.

Now Lebanon is the scene of a repetition of the disgraceful adventures that are taking place under the name of peace.

Iran: Paper Says Security Council Must Be Responsible for Lebanon

LD2104183596 Tehran IRAN NEWS in English 16 Apr p 2

[Editorial: "Crucial Responsibility Rests on Security Council"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Despite some crucial international moves, Israel's five-day air and artillery blitz of Lebanon continued yesterday.

As a response to the criminal Israeli offensive against the Lebanese citizens in general, the Hizballah, or Party of God, in an announcement broadcast yesterday on their Al-Manar television said: "We swear by the blood and severed bodies of our children ... shake the ground under the feet of our enemies, America and Israel."

Important developments took place Sunday [14 April] and yesterday to stop the deadly situation in Lebanon which has now put the peace of the entire region in jeopardy. These developments included the exchange between Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati and French counterpart Herve de Charette, on joint action to end the Israeli attack on Lebanon.

On Sunday, the cabinet of President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, while pledging sympathy to the Lebanese, decided to also send material aid. Iran sent letters to the EU, Russia, China and Japan, asking them to play their proper role in keeping the guns in the Middle East silent.

Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri started what he termed a "peace mission" which took him to Syria, Egypt and France. He is also to travel to Morocco and Saudi Arabia.

French President Jacques Chirac dispatched Foreign Minister De Charette to the region on a similar mission.

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Another significant move was an emergency meeting of the Security Council, which is now in progress.

Countering these peace moves, Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres adamantly announced that his country will continue what he called 'Operation Grapes of Wrath'.

As was expected, Washington voiced support for Israel's criminal bombardment of Lebanon which has resulted in heavy civilian casualties and made hundreds of thousands homeless.

Israel and the United States still have to learn that the Lebanese will not sit silent while their homeland is occupied. Its is rational and logical that one should not sit quietly when an enemy has usurped part of one's country.

Since 1978, when Israel tried to wipe out combatants of the Palestinian Liberation Organization, up to this date, trouble has started after short or long intervals. And it will continue as long as south Lebanon is under occupation.

The only solution to the problem is an end to the usurpation. If not, al-Hariri is right when he says the "Hizballah gains power with each attack."

We are right to pin all our hopes on the on-going Security Council. The prestige of that world body is at stake. Does it really do justice? Or does it just obey the orders of the US.

The 15-member Council should realize its historical responsibility and issue a time-limit to Israel on its Resolution 425 to vacate the occupied land in South Lebanon, or Israel should face the same fate as Iraq in 1991, when it had to be forcibly thrown back from its neighbour, Kuwait.

Iran: Velayati Says All Parties in Lebanon Oppose U.S. Plan

LD2404161996 Tehran IRNA in English 1410 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, April 24, IRNA — Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati said in Damascus on Wednesday [24 April] that all parties involved in Lebanon crisis have opposed the plan put forward by the U.S. and the Zionist regime on setting up a cease-fire in Lebanon.

In an interview with British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Velayati said that Lebanese Hizballah is not against truce, but, it required sufficient guarantees to prevent the Zionist regime from violating the cease-fire in future.

The Iranian foreign minister, refuting the allegations that the Islamic Republic of Iran had encouraged Hizballah to attack Northern Israel, said it is the U.S. that should be blamed for its strong support for Israeli onslaught on Lebanon from the early days of the recent crisis.

Velayati said that there was evidence proving that Israel had been the initiator of the recent wave of attacks and that Hizballah had shown reaction to the assaults.

Velayati also dismissed as baseless allegations leveled by the U.S. secretary of state, Warren Christopher, that Iran triggered recent crisis in Lebanon.

He said what Christopher has stated is nothing new, adding that he had in fact repeated the statement of the Zionist regime.

Iran: Daily Urges Islamic Countries Not To Welcome Christopher

LD2004100696 Tehran IRNA in English 0948 GMT 20 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, April 20, IRNA — The English daily, IRAN NEWS Saturday [20 April] welcomed the French bid to stop Zionist violence in Lebanon but called on the regional Islamic countries to close their doors on the U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher with regards to Washington's hostile attitude towards Islam.

The Western media tried during the recent years to present Israel as a peace-loving country, said the editorial adding the entity of Israel was so rogue that it was proved once again to the international opinion that the Zionist regime has no respect for human values at all.

Despite all claims, it is still to be proved that the rulers in Washington really respect the public opinion of their country, it added saying so far it has been proved that U.S. influential groups, particularly the Jewish lobby are so strong that even the President seems to be helpless before them.

Stressing that "the U.S. President has no guts to respect the public opinion and condemn the Zionist crimes" because of his fear of the Jewish lobby, it said, "definitely the Americans will not tolerate this type of humiliation for a long time."

Criticizing the Security Council for proving once again to be a "passive machinery", the editorial said, it failed to fulfil its basic duty.

Turning to the regional countries, the editorial said the recent developments in Lebanon are enough for the regional countries to realize the true nature of the Zionist regime.

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Referring to the visit to the region of Christopher, it said, with regards to the hostile attitude adopted by the U.S. against Islam, "it become essential that the Islamic countries in the region must close their doors for the entry of Secretary of State Warren Christopher to their countries."

The paper welcomed the French stand saying, "Foreign Minister Herve de Charette is already in the region and the regional countries should support the envoy sent by President Jacques Chirac."

Iran: Clinton, Not 'Liberals,' Responsible for Economic Plight

LD2404151096 Tehran SALAM in Persian 22 Apr 96 p 3

[Unidentified reader comment, from the "Hello, SALAM" column]

[FBIS Translated Text] Hello, SALAM: Brigadier General Mohsen Reza'i, commander in chief of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps, while addressing a gathering of the Ashura and al-Zahra mobilization battalions, said: "I blame the liberals for our economic plight and today's rising prices." But I believe the truth is something else. At present, our country's president, the heads of the legislative and judicial branches, all members of the Guardian Council, and the majority of the Majles deputies are clergymen. Could you please let us know where the liberals can be found, so that the mobilization forces may get hold of them by the ears and drag them to the dungeons?

I believe Mr Reza'i would have been closer to the truth had he blamed Clinton, the Zionists, etc., etc., instead of the liberals.

Iran: Majles Speaker Urges Resistance to U.S. Aggression, Plots

LD2404161596 Tehran IRNA in English 1425 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, April 24, IRNA — Majles Speaker 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri on Wednesday [24 April] referred to the anniversary of the Tabas incident and stressed the determination of the Iranian nation to resist under the leadership of Ayatollah 'Ali Khamene'i U.S. agression and plots.

In implementing a conspiracy to free American hostages, several U.S. military airplanes and helicopters violated the Iranian air space on April 24, 1980, but some of the planes crashed in the Tabas desert, in northeastern Iran leaving a number of American servicemen dead.

Speaking at the open session of the Majles, Nateq-Nuri said that with the blessings of the Almighty, the U.S. plot was thwarted and the Americans were disgraced.

But, he added, despite such a defeat and disgrace, the Americans did not learn a lesson and were still continuing committing crimes and hatching conspiracies against the Muslim nation of Iran.

He said that the U.S. has spared no plots aginst the Muslim nation of Iran either prior to the revolution by supporting the shah's regime or after the revolution by freezing Iran's assets and through direct interference in the internal affairs of the country by directly supporting coup d'etates.

He termed the explicit support of the U.S. for the aggression of the Zionist regime against the Lebanese people as another brutal and aggressive aspect of America's aggressive and savage spirit against Muslim nations.

Iran: Kharrazi Interviewed on International Issues

LD2304123696 Tehran IRNA in English 0755 GMT 23 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, April 23, IRNA — Iran's permanent representative to the U.N., Kamal Kharrazi says that American companies are the main losers of the U.S. sanctions against Iran exerted since last June. In an interview with the English daily 'TEHRAN TIMES' printed Tuesday [23 April], he added that a seminar is to be held in Dallas, Texas, in May to study the economic repercussions of the sanctions on Iran and its impact on American companies.

Kharrazi added that the White House maintains its dual containment policy against Iran despite the prevailing discord among U.S. politicians and academicians over Washington's stance towards Tehran. "Sooner or later, Washington will realize that its stance towards Tehran is not realistic and that economic and political pressure on Iran will not yield any results," he told the paper.

"The move is not based on geopolitical realities but is due to the interest of a third party, the Zionist regime," he said.

Since the sanctions are against the Algiers accord, Kharrazi added, Tehran is studying to lodge a law suit at The Hague.

Commenting on Ankara-Tel Aviv military agreement, he cautioned that the Zionist regime, in a long term policy, intends to strengthen its foothold in the region. "Tehran maintains the agreement was signed for this

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purpose," he said describing it as a threat against regional countries. On Iran's stand towards the Palestinian crisis and the peace talks between Syria and Israel, Kharrazi dismissed that such a peace could guarantee the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. "It is more of a surrender than peace," he said.

Turning to the U.N. reaction to the Zionist crimes in Lebanon, he said, "without considering any punitive measures against the aggressors, the U.N. Security Council has asked for a cease-fire." He added that Washington, as a member of the council, has threatened to veto any resolution against the Zionist regime.

"It is crystal clear that the U.N. and the Security Council have a double standard for different countries," he said adding that as long as the right of veto exists, the world will witness U.N. double standard policies.

On allegations on human rights violations in Iran, he said, "the European human rights commissions prepare their reports mainly on the basis of false information, this leads us to doubt our continued cooperation with the rapporteur of the human rights commission."

Iran's U.N. representative added that such reports indicate that human rights have become a political means in the hands of certain countries. He urged the Iranian government to introduce human rights criteria proposed in Islam to the world in an attempt to abort such allegations and to show that Islamic human rights not only covers all the rights considered by Europe, but is more comprehensive than any other school of thought. Kharrazi emphasized that such biased propaganda will be thwarted once foreigners become familiarized with the realities in Iran.

He added that Iran's active participation in international conferences will help eliminate doubts regarding its stances on various issues.

Iran: Borujerdi Announces Taleban Acceptance of Kabul Pullback

LD2404154696 Tehran IRNA in English 1457 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, April 24, IRNA — Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Asia-Pacific Affairs 'Ala'eddin Borujerdi said here on Wednesday [24 April] that the Taleban has accepted an Iranian proposal to retreat their forces to outside Kabul to make the population of the city out of the reach of the military forces.

Borujerdi told IRNA that as Iran has invited all Afghan groups to avoid further hostility and establish cease-fire to stop bloodshed in Afghanistan, the Taleban were also proposed to pull back to areas outside Kabul to make the civilians in the city immune from the reach of the military forces.

He said that according to the latest information the proposal has been accepted by the Taleban delegation led by governor general of Herat Maulavi Yar Mohammad.

Borujerdi said evidences were shown to the Taleban delegation on escalation of provocations on border points and trafficking of narcotic drugs since the group took control of Herat Province.

The delegation promised to deal with the issue of drug smuggling in the area seriously.

On the outcome of his latest peace mission to Afghanistan, Borujerdi said he held talks with many Afghan personalities during the visit.

He said he negotiated with the officials of the Islamic Government of Afghanistan and President Burhanuddin Rabbani has promised to attend the inauguration ceremony of Mashhad-Sarakhs railway.

Borujerdi said during the visit good reports were received on negotiations between the Afghan Government and the opposition and that the two parties have reached considerable understanding. He expressed hope that an overall peace would be materialized in Afghanistan soon.

He said that an important point seen in the talks with Afghan personalities is that they hold a consensus on the need for an immediate settlement of Afghan crisis.

On the recent visit of Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati to Islamabad, Borujerdi said relations between Iran and Pakistan were taking a good trend, adding that bilateral ties on the basis of mutual interest would develop between the two countries in all areas.

On the latest developments in Islamabad-Kabul relations, Borujerdi said the Islamic Republic of Iran would spare no efforts for normalization of ties between the two Muslim countries, adding that the issue was raised during Velayati's visit to Islamabad.

Iran: Health Minister Signs Accord To Set Up Plant in Tajikistan

LD2004085496 Tehran IRNA in English 0831 GMT 20 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Mashhad, Khorasan Prov., April 20, IRNA — Under a letter of understanding signed recently between the health ministers of Iran and Tajikistan, Iran is to establish a plant in Tajikistan for the production of serums, the managing director of Mashhad's 'Thamen' serum factory disclosed here Friday [19 April].

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The official, Seyed Ahmad Kakhki, who accompanied Iran's health minister Dr. 'Ali Reza Marandi on his visit to Tajikistan, added that Thamen, which has been exporting various kinds of serums to Tajikistan, would be setting up a plant in that country with a production capacity of five million units of intravenous serums.

Thamen, which is based in Mashhad, will also be providing Tajikistan with the technological know-how in this field.

Iran: Indian Envoy—India To Transit Goods to Central Asia via Iran

LD2104162196 Tehran IRNA in English 1024 GMT 21 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, April 21, IRNA — Indian Ambassador to Iran, Siddharth Singh stated here Sunday [21 April] that Iran will turn into a center for transit of Indian products to Central Asian republics and the Caucasus after the inauguration of Sarakhs-Tajan railroad.

He told IRNA that the railroad will also lead to further promotion of trade cooperation among Asian and European states.

The Indian diplomat also praised immense efforts of Iranian and Turkmen officials in completing such international railway.

Calling for promotion of trade exchanges between New Delhi and Tehran, he said there are great potentials in both countries which will allow then to meet each other's needs.

The Indian ambassador further expressed hope that the volume of bilateral trade which stood at dlrs. 700 million in 1994-95 will rise in future.

On impact of U.S. sanctions on Iran and Tehran-New Delhi relations, he noted that his country follows an independent policy adding that Indian trade with the Islamic Republic will not be influenced by external forces and influences.

Iran: Industries Minister on Need To Boost Exports

NC2404181996 Tehran HAMSHAHRI in Persian 11 Apr 96 p 8

[Interview with Industries Minister Mohammad Reza Ne'matzadeh by unidentified HAMSHAHRI correspondent in Tehran — date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [HAMSHAHRI] Your Excellency. As you have observed, the boosting of non-oil exports has been a major priority for our national economic programs. In the first Five-year Plan, in order to attain this objective, certain openings were visualized. In practice, our trade and foreign exchange policies were compiled in such a manner that the earnings from non-oil exports displayed an increasing trend, however, this trend slowed down last year and the foreign exchange earnings from non-oil exports slumped. What is your assessment of the boosting of nonoil exports?

[Ne'matzadeh] First, I will mention some simple but important principles that are being considered in most societies of the world and have also been accepted in our country. [passage omitted]

Even though we have achieved great success in the past years that cannot be overlooked, it is not enough, and in order to further boost non-oil exports, we need an advanced longterm plan.

Another point is that we should not be content with one indicator of our exports. Today, the indicator for gauging the strength of the national economy in the world is the volume of its foreign exchange. [passage omitted]

[HAMSHAHRI] What is the share of industrial products in our country's non-oil exports?

[Ne'matzadeh] In the first years of the implementation of the first Plan, industrial products constituted two percent of non-oil exports that had risen to eight percent by last year. Hence, in view of what I mentioned earlier, this should increase ten-fold in order to reach the level of other exporting countries.

[HAMSHAHRI] It is being said that in view of the country's current industrial situation, there is a very slight chance of attaining the level you have specified for industrial production of non-oil exports.

[Ne'matzadeh] The issue is that even though the principles I mentioned earlier were accepted by our country, they were mostly in the form of lip service, rather than serious action. In the first development [Five-year] Plan the figures envisaged by the government for non-oil exports were considered as flights of fancy by the Islamic Majles. It is true that we did not achieve them, but a glance at the performance of the non-oil exports will prove that we have had a high level of growth.

It is important that an appropriate and consistent direction exists. If we wish to increase industrial exports of non-oil commodities we should allow this to be done in all aspects. This means that we should permit imports of raw materials needed by these industries. We cannot implement the broadening of exports on the one hand, while imposing restrictions on raw materials, equipment, and machinery on the other.

If we cannot invest in industries to increase the current industrial capability or to capitalize on it appropriately,

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we will not be able to increase our industrial exports. We must have the necessary investment in order to replace the current depreciation in industry. [passage omitted]

[HAMSHAHRI] What is the rate of growth that has been envisaged in the second Five-Year Plan?

[Ne'matzadeh] In the second Plan, the average rate of the growth of annual industrial investment foreseen is six percent. If this is achieved without any fluctuations, it means that in the final year of the Plan, we will be in a position like we were in the first year of the implementation of the second Plan with regard to industrial production.

In view of the fact that the rate of depreciation is further accelerated over a period of time, we might be more backward in 1378 [year beginning 21 March 1999] than we were in 1373 [year beginning 21 March 1994]

[HAMSHAHRI] Have the necessary calculations for longterm planning been carried out in the field of increasing industrial production?

[Ne'matzadeh] This has been done by the Industries Ministry, and I will refer to some of the issues briefly. If we were to assess the performance of the country's foreign exchange earnings in the past 5-6 years, we will observe that we have exported an average of $20 billion worth of oil and non-oil products.

If we were to take the value of non-oil exports of 1373, that is $4.8 billion as the denominator, we should have $15 billion worth of non-oil exports to replace the earnings obtained from oil exports. [passage omitted]

[HAMSHAHRI] What is projected growth rate for industrial exports in the second development Plan?

[Ne'matzadeh] In the second Plan, the annual growth rate for non-oil exports is predicted to be eight percent, but no figure has been specified for industrial exports; however in its programs, the Industries Ministry has forecasted a growth rate of 15 percent for industrial exports, for the attainment of which, appropriate policies need to be adopted.

[HAMSHAHRI] Have the targets and programs of the Industries ministry for enhancing industrial exports been approved by the Plan and Budget Organization and other economic departments? Are you hopeful that economic policies in all departments are in harmony with your programs?

[Ne'matzadeh] The second development Plan that has been ratified by the Islamic Majles does not specify the details of the issues. [passage omitted]

It appears that the attainment of these necessary objectives is possible if the social, economic, and political atmosphere is conducive, and if the necessary laws are compiled for the purpose. Non-oil exports should be considered worthy enough so that the targets can be achieved. I cannot do so by myself. Just as in political matters, all moral and material resources are mustered in order to accomplish our objectives, we should do the same in this regard as well.

[HAMSHAHRI] It appears that in the current climate, certain political forces have generated the impression in society that exports are the cause of high prices, and therefore, a favorable atmosphere for boosting non-oil exports does not exist.

[Ne'matzadeh] As I had stated in the earlier part of my remarks, his eminence, the great leader who is the highest source of decisionmaking in the country, is in favor of increasing non-oil exports and wants the national economy to be weaned away from oil. In order to reach this objective, we do not have any recourse but to increase non-oil exports, especially of industrial products.

If there were no surplus in the country's production, it could have been stated that the exports were instrumental in raising prices, however, those products are currently being exported, the quantity of which is in excess of domestic consumption but even these are encountering problems.

On the other hand, we should bear in mind that the successful exporting countries that do not produce enough for their domestic needs, export their products and import the same. [as published]

The concept that if the production does not conform to the level of consumption, goods should not be exported, is fallacious. We should keep the economy open so that it can evolve and can choose a profitable path. [passage omitted]

[HAMSHAHRI] What are the practical measures taken by the Industries Ministry for broadening of industrial exports?

[Ne'matzadeh] The compilation of the necessary standards for improving the quality of indigenous products, creating and extending the information network, encouraging and assisting the establishment and proliferation of specialized export companies are all part of the industries' ministry's program.

In addition, we also have on our agenda, the procurement of the necessary foreign exchange.

[HAMSHAHRI] Have studies been carried out in the industries sector in which products are more exported-oriented, and in which sector?

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[Ne'matzadeh] In the current situation, our industrial exports are in a introductory stage, and it is too early to make any judgement at this time.

It appears that we should allow the process of industrial exports to be implemented in our economy so that the market itself finds the answer regarding which area of industrial exports has the ability to compete or yield the greatest economic returns.

We believe that in the present conditions, relying on relative benefits cannot prove to be a suitable criterion. In the past few years, as the exporting of industrial goods has been implemented, the quality of domestically-produced commodities has improved remarkably. There has been greater economic discipline among the workforce of the producers, and the companies have become so well organized that the managers come to us and say that the present organization in the government network does not respond to their needs.

Iran: Official—Government Policies Damaging Investment, Exports

LD2104101396 Tehran IRNA in English 0833 GMT 21 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, April 21, IRNA — The secretary of Iran's High Council of Free Trade Zones, Morteza Alviri, stressed here Saturday [20 April] that government's economic policies are damaging investment and exports of non-oil products in the country.

In an exclusive interview with IRNA, he said that the stabilization of the dollar at rls. [rials] 3,000, has created a triple rate system as some foreign exchange offices closed down and a black market was formed where the dollar was traded at rls. 4,000 while the floating rate was rls. 1,750.

There are many disadvantages to this system including incurring of unnecessary foreign exchange expenses, he added.

Commenting on the export policies of the government during the previous year, he noted that the policies, aside from harming non-oil exports, dampened the inclination of exporters to send and sell goods abroad.

Government policies during the first five-year development plan led to an increase of non-oil export income of dlrs. 4.6 billion in the year 1373 (1994-95), compared to dlrs. 670 million in the year 1367 (1988-89). If this trend had continued, the export of non-oil products would have reached dlrs. 5.5 billion but the implementation of the new policies caused non-oil exports last year to reach only some dlrs. three billion, Alviri remarked.

One of the factors harming non-oil trade was the amendment made in the regulations affecting goods that were permitted for exportation, he said, adding that international markets do not rely on exporters who cannot meet buyers' needs on a long-term basis. He further stated that if the government upheld its recent policies, non-oil export income in the current year would only amount to dlrs. four billion, while a return to the policies during the first five-year plan could boost non-oil export income to reach about dlrs. six billion.

On the effect of the government's current economic policies, Alviri reiterated that in the short run, they would curb inflation, but in the long run, inflation would again spiral. He said that economic recession and inflation already exist due to the increase in production costs and the finished price of goods. Meanwhile, people had low purchasing power, leading to the closure of production entities.

He suggested various ways to hammer the 60 percent inflation rate, such as strict control of the amount of currency in circulation, implementing laws favoring production, correcting the distribution system, and influencing interest rates given to bank deposits. The adoption of such policies would cause inflation to go down to a one-digit figure in three years, he stated.

Alviri also underlined that another factor that could significantly keep inflation down was to concentrate on non-oil exports.

Iran: Newspaper Questions Unemployment Levels

LD2304145896 Tehran BAHMAN in Persian 20 Apr 96 p 4

[Unattributed article: "How Many People Are Unemployed: 1.5 million or 5.5 Million?"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] A few years ago, when long lines of young people gathered in front of airline offices to buy tickets to Japan, the issue of emigration to Japan was raised amid great commotion and later disappeared, again amid great commotion, without any clear result.

In those days, when some young people went to Japan and later to Kuwait in order to solve the unemployment problem — some were also making such trips with dreams of making huge fortunes — some experts saw this as a solution for reducing the unemployment figures and others stressed the side-effects of such an approach and listed its social and economic costs.

The problem of unemployment in Iran remains serious. Statistics suggest that over 1.5 million of the country's active population are unemployed. However, the manifestation of this phenomenon is undergoing an upheaval.

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Despite the experts, the phenomenon of unemployed university graduates is arising and a provisional figure of 600,000 unemployed university graduates has still not raised any protests from the relevant authorities and must, therefore, be considered definite.

Unemployment in Iran can now be seen in three clear manifestations: Seasonal unemployment, graduate unemployment, and underemployment. If the policy of exporting our workforce is a solution for the first two manifestations, another solution is needed for the third manifestation: raising productivity. [passage omitted]

Iran: Municipality Reacts to Official's Remarks on Elections

LD1904152296 Tehran SALAM in Persian 11 Apr 96 p2

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Following remarks by the head of Tehran Province's justice department about offenses committed in the first round of the Majles elections, in particular by the Tehran Municipality, a statement has been sent to this newspaper by the municipality.

The statement says: During the last few days, a certain political faction has levelled repeated allegations against the Tehran Municipality. This is predictable, given the upcoming second round of elections. On the other hand, replying to this old and tried method of provocation would in itself intensify the existing tension and mar the atmosphere surrounding the election process. For these reasons, the municipality's general office has decided not to enter this arena, which more than anything else was influenced by political factionalism. This office has therefore decided to respond to these allegations at a more apposite time, perhaps even after the elections.

However, the remarks made yesterday by an esteemed official of Tehran Province Justice Department ['Ali Razini] forces the public relations office of the municipality to act and defend the honor and integrity of the honest staff of this organization, and to inform the public about certain facts.

First, one cannot claim that in an organization as large as the Tehran Municipality, nobody out of the total of around 10,000 employees has committed an offense in the form of expressing support for this or that faction. Obviously, offenders, no matter what rank they occupy in whatever governmental organization, must be dealt with by the law. However, what we would like to ask is that, even if a number of individuals in a governmental organization have committed an offense, is it right and proper that these offenses should mar the reputation of the organization as a whole? [passage omitted]

To do more justice, would it not have been better if the judicial official in question had named the 50 or so offending municipality employees, rather than accusing the organization as a whole?

Another surprise was the unprecedented manner in which the Voice and Vision of the Islamic Republic of Iran, an organization which has such a sensitive responsibility, reported the interview, and in fact gave so much support to what has already been said about this topic, that the interviewee himself had to deny certain parts of the report.

None of the cases mentioned in the interview has so far been officially conveyed to the municipality, and this office is not aware of any statement on the offenses or whether a legal file is being compiled on the cases, or indeed if prosecution is in the pipeline. It might be said that the offenses concerned certain individuals and therefore the municipality did not need to be told. If this is the case, then why has Tehran Municipality been subjected to such an extensive and comprehensive onslaught of slander and adverse propaganda?

The last point is that the esteemed brother, whose remarks on the ongoing complaints against the municipality were carried by radio and television, is obviously aware that such statements by an official in his position should not in any way serve the interests of a particular faction to the detriment of other groups. It would be really unfair to undermine the validity of an election, which the esteemed leader has aptly described as "magnificent," merely for the sake of gaining a few seats in the Majles or discrediting the opposition.

Countries throughout the world try to present their elections as lawful and valid, no matter how much the whole thing has been rigged. It would be a great injustice to tell the world that these great elections are devoid of validity and credibility. What justification can some newspapers offer for employing all their means to portray such a magnificent election as a flawed and improper event? We mean, of course, those newspapers who contend that their advantage over others is their "mission" of defending religious and revolutionary values.

Iran: Article Questions Daily on Forging Campaign Posters

LD2004103696 Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 15 Apr 96 p 2

["Why Do You Dodge the Issue?"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] KAR VA KARGAR [WORK AND WORKERS] newspaper — which had been criticized by KAYHAN for forging an election

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campaign poster in support of the Kargozaran [Servants of Construction] group and had become the subject of much criticism when trying to answer a question about the financial sources for its huge and extravagant election campaign — today, instead of apologizing for its immoral act of forging election posters and responding to logical questions about the financial source for its election campaign, has once again indulged in abusive language and pretentiousness, and has tried to divert the attention of its readers, particularly the committed workers. The questions posed by KAYHAN are clear and unambiguous and we do not think that bad language should have been used to respond to those questions. Those questions are still valid and we hope that the gentlemen [of KAR VA KARGAR] control their nerves and respond to them in respectful terms. The questions are as follows:

1. Why has KAR VA KARGAR forged [election] posters?

2. What are the sources for its huge election campaign?

[Passage omitted]

Iran: Article Raises Questions on Financial Sources of Campaigns

LD2004125696 Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 16 Apr 96 p 2

[From the "Note of the Day" column: "Preserving Respect for the System Is Highest Priority"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] During this round of elections, financial sources for huge election campaigns of a number of factions and candidates has become a major question for the public. Unfortunately, so far we have not had a clear and unambiguous answer to this logical question. Answering it is one of the most urgent duties of the relevant organs and departments as the question can harm the people's confidence. [passage omitted]

In one word, according to the wise remarks of the eminent leader [Khamene'i], "If the State Audit Office is active and on the scene, then excessive criticism will be avoided and people's questions will be answered."

Iran: SALAM Promises Explanation for Publishing Election Ad

LD2004170496 Tehran SALAM in Persian 17 Apr 96 p 2

["News Service" report: "The Story of the Publication of an Advertisement and the Night Experienced by the Newspaper"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Yesterday a number of the morning and evening newspapers published a report about the gathering of a group of people outside the offices of the SALAM newspaper. They wrote that the reason for the gathering was to protest against the publication of an advertisement by SALAM in support of a group of the election candidates using the title of Basij. A number of those newspapers wrote that the commander of the Basij [Resistance Force] has filed a complaint with the Tehran justice department against SALAM. A number of other newspapers had also published a letter sent to SALAM by the commander of the Basij.

But why SALAM itself did not publish the news of the gathering outside its offices yesterday, what was the nature of that advertisement, who were those who had gathered outside the offices of the newspaper saying and what did they want, are questions which we shall answer for our esteemed readers after the elections. We shall also tell you about how the story behind the publication of the report, God willing.

Iran: Majles Candidate on Confrontations Facing Islam

LD2004111896 Tehran SALAM in Persian 13 Apr 96 pp 2,4

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] His Excellency Dr. Seyyed Kazem Akrami, a former minister of education and a candidate for Majles from the Coalition of Groups in the Line of the Imam, took part in an interview with our correspondent. We draw your attention to this interview: [passage omitted]

[SALAM] Would you please explain the association's political outlook and the stances of its election candidates?

[Akrami] As you know, the Islamic Association of University Lecturers is a cultural-political formation whose essence is belief in and commitment to Islam and the revolution, as well as actual allegiance to the Guardianship of the Supreme Jurisconsult. We believe that the pure Muhammadan Islam — whose distinctions from the American [brand of] Islam was meticulously delineated by his eminence the Imam [Khomeyni], sanctified be his soul, through his blessings at end of his life — is confronting three main currents beside its known open enemies and fronts.

1. Believers in the West, those who have lost themselves and are overawed by Western powers and orders, who have given their hearts to that region's humanist and liberal ideology and schools and do not like Islam except in the light of interpretations which are compatible and in alignment with those ideologies.

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2. Those experts and the dogmatic people who, while rationalizing the most tyrannical of colonial relations with capitalism, in the manner of "traditionalists" — and oblivious to the late Imam's remark about taking the time and place into account in matters of religious jurisprudence — are unable to understand the tremendous capacity and the searching quality of Islamic jurisprudence and teachings. With ignorant piety, they present a portrait of religion and the beloved Islam that depicts Islam as incapable of facing the new world and meeting the requirements of the day, and doomed to failure and defeat.

3. The indifferent capitalists and well-to-do, under the cover of incomplete interpretations and understandings of Islam by the above two groups, embark on plundering the public wealth, the hard- earned income of the deprived and national resources and in the manner of demagogues advocate justice and welfare where — by the most optimistic expectations — it might be possible for the oppressed employees and individuals to get something after the cup of interests and benefits gained by the well-to-do runs over; or it might be possible for the wound of poverty of the deprived to be dressed with the help of alms given by the wealthy.

The association considers its cultural and political mission to be relentless and in a constant confrontation with the recognized enemies and the disclosure of the nature of the above currents. It believes the defense of the integrity of the Constitution and the all-round implementation of the Constitution to be instruments for realizing those objectives. It is in line with that, that the association stresses the need for safeguarding the rights and legitimate freedoms as means to pursue those objectives and believes that "independence, freedom, and social justice" are three manifestations of a single truth. The weakening of any of those three — under any pretext — is wrong and amounts to detracting from the aspirations of the revolution and the pure Muhammadan Islam. Subordination to and support for the exalted leader and the supreme jurisconsult [Ayatollah Khamene'i] — who, on many occasions, has stressed the need for continuing the path and ideology of the Imam [Khomeyni] — is another aspect of our belief in the integrity of the Constitution and is the conduit for realizing the objectives of the association. [passage omitted]

Iran: BAHMAN Sets Out Publishing Aims

LD2304171096 Tehran BAHMAN in Persian 20 Apr 96 pp 1,7

[Article: "What do we say? What do we want?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Since the publication of the first issue of BAHMAN, we have been faced with persistent questions on what principles BAHMAN adheres to and, basically, in pursuit of what aims it is published. We hoped that the articles and analyses appearing in BAHMAN will clearly identify the main thrust of the newspaper's message and that there will, therefore, be no need for an explicit and specific statement on the aims and principles guiding the discussions in BAHMAN. However, as a result of our contacts with readers (verbal and written), we have realized that there is not only a need for an explanation of the overall framework in which the paper is cast, but that such an explanation will assist our audience in understanding and interpreting the material published in BAHMAN.

We will, therefore, try to explain briefly to our readers what framework BAHMAN opts for in the selection of its material. The point that our readers must bear in mind is that BAHMAN is not a spokesman for a specific political organization, so the readers must not expect total uniformity in its contents. In the main, BAHMAN tries to air different viewpoints and to initiate constructive discussions and debates between these viewpoints. However, this variety of viewpoints and material does not mean that BAHMAN is devoid of any specific stance or line. Its line is, of course, a general one and allows for flexibility and variety.

After this introduction, we can state that the framework for the activities of BAHMAN can be set out as follows:

1. Helping to establish a religion-based society and strengthening an interpretation of religion which combines purity, integrity, resourcefulness, and concern for the exigencies of the age.

2. Supporting the comprehensive development (economic, political, cultural and social) of Islamic Iran.

3. Defending the legal rights of the citizens of the Islamic Republic of Iran, regardless of their viewpoints and positions.

4. Defending the rights of the press and expanding the scope of their freedoms as members of a close press family.

5. Assisting the establishment of an enthusiastic, motivated, and helpful climate for the participation of all knowledgeable people, loyal to Islamic Iran and to the

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Islamic revolution, toward raising and analyzing problems, and finding solutions to them.

A brief explanation of the above framework may make it easier to understand. For this reason, we will give a brief explanation about each point.

A religion-based society is one in which the population has faith, with total conviction, in its religious beliefs and values and, therefore, tries to judge its behavior and decisions on all levels (individual, group and government) in accordance with religious criteria in order to ensure that they do not conflict with religion.

An interpretation of religion has purity and integrity when, first, it is based on reputable religious texts and sources; second, it is nourished and enriched by traditions and teachings accepted by knowledgeable religious people (especially, among theologians); third, it benefits from internal and logical comprehensiveness and coherence; and, fourth, it is methodical and based on recognized criteria. Clergymen and seminaries play a fundamental role in this regard.

In order to allow human understanding to grasp religion, effort must be exerted to make that understanding capable of responding to the practical and theoretical problems of the people of the age, and the possibility must be created for human achievements and learning to nourish and assist the comprehension of religious concepts and commands. In addition to this, our understanding of religion must be subjected to constant intra-religious criticism and assessment, and endlessly refined.

We speak of national development in the sense that, in the course of it, the social system and, consequently, all the elements which contribute to it (population structures, culture, material achievements, the social structure and social institutions) and the relations between these elements undergo an upheaval and the society enters a new period in its life as a result of a historical change. This new period has been given various names, one of the best known of which is an industrial society.

On the whole, that which is called national development is the ensemble of a collection of processes, which strengthen one another reciprocally, and, depending on the area of development in these processes, are identified with such prefixes as economic, political, cultural, and social. The most important of these processes are as follows:

1. The process of a long-term increase in the productive capabilities of a society, toward the delivery of an ever greater variety of economic goods and services to the people, on condition that this increase in capabilities is based on the use of advancing technology, institutional adjustments, and an outlook and behavior that is capable of using such technology (economic development).

2. The expansion and concentration of government power, specialization, and differentiation of the duties of political structures and the coordination of these duties and structures (political development).

3. Increasing public participation in the process of electing leaders and in the choice of political direction (political development).

4. The taking root of meaningful and peaceful rivalry between organized groups toward attaining governmental positions within the political structure (political development).

5. Growth in solidarity and differentiation in the social structure (social development). (An increase in the number of sub-systems and parts, the level of specialization and the division of social labour, reciprocal dependency between the parts of the system and social unity.)

6. The establishment of the necessary conditions for increasing effective public participation in personal and social affairs, with the most important of these conditions being: Creating equal opportunities, supplying basic public necessities, and establishing institutionalized facilities for achieving social aims and ideals (social development).

7. Increasing the possibility of participating in cultural life, having access to it, and benefiting from its products (making culture universal and popular within society) (cultural development).

8. Increasing the stock of information, the channels for transferring it, and the speed with which it is transferred (cultural development).

9. Increasing the level of cultural creativity and inventiveness (cultural development).

10. Strengthening identity and increasing cultural solidarity (cultural development).

11. Increasing rationality in dealing with material affairs (cultural development).

Every citizen of Islamic Iran, regardless of stance or leaning, has certain rights from the legal point of view (the constitution and ordinary laws). The legal system of the Islamic Republic of Iran is one of the best in the world in terms of comprehensiveness and maturity, such that, if all the officially recognized laws are adhered to and realized, there will be suitable grounds for the development and growth of all citizens.

Simply having a codified and effective ensemble on paper is not enough to solve the legal problems of a

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society. Alongside the responsible branches (legislative and executive), there must be independent institutions and authorities that defend these laws and call for their realization.

Defending other people's legal rights (especially those of rivals and opponents) is one of the signs of maturity and an indication of development within a group or society. One must strive to respect the legal rights of individuals regardless of their stances. This results in stability, harmony, and solidarity beyond the political and theoretical differences in a society.

The press community has, on occasion, had members which have acted not as members of a close press family but as its internal enemies. Their only concern has been to weaken existing publications and to drive them out of this sphere of activity, doing their utmost to create conditions in which they can restrict other publications. Among this group of members one can see both people opposed to press freedom and people who, under the guise of demands for greater press freedom, try to detract from confidence in other publications as well — by breaking legal boundaries and accepted social practice — and to make other publications react in kind.

Defending press rights and paving the way for an acceptance of interpretations of the law that would lead to an expansion of the press's field of activity is only possible through legal channels.

The problems of a nation can be solved by that nation. The exigencies of wisdom, basic rights, and morality demand that all those who are prepared to sacrifice individual and short-term interests for the sake of the collective, long-term good of the country, can take part in the analysis of problems and the suggestion of solutions with a high degree of enthusiasm and strength.

See further: Two books by Professor Morteza Motahhari about the Islamic Republic of Iran, and Islam and the exigencies of the age.

Iran: Larijani on 'Protecting the System'

LD2504121196 Tehran RESALAT in Persian 21 Apr 96 pp 1, 6, 7

[Interview with Dr. Mohammad Javad Larijani, Tehran Majles deputy, by unidentified RESALAT correspondent, under the headline: "Protecting the system and helping the expansion of the international movement of Islam are two uncompromising goals"; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted]

[Correspondent] A number of foreign political analysts believe that Iran has shown some signs of liberalism in its foreign policy. In your view, to what extent is this true?

[Larijani] We have always had two firm goals in our foreign policy: to protect the Islamic Republic and to help the expansion and growth of the international movement of Islam. These are two valuable products of our Islamic revolution. These two goals have been among our resolute goals in our foreign policy. As long as we follow these two we will not deviate from the true path and will always follow the correct path.

[Correspondent] Please tell us about the green lights that have apparently been given by Iran in its foreign policy?

[Larijani] Green lights about which subject?

[Correspondent] About liberalization of foreign policy. Is there any degree of liberalism in the country?

[Larijani] Inside our country the most important forms of tendency to liberalism have been found among a section of intellectuals and educated people in the form of having doubts about the efficiency and justification of the religious system. For the general public, it propagates a kind of indifference [tasamoh] [toward the system] and this might have some attractions for certain age groups.

[Correspondent] What about the executive body?

[Larijani] It has not been without effect on the executive body. That is to say it has led to various remarks. For example some people say that they want economic development and we must have cultural development first. If we want cultural development then we must have pluralism before that. If we want pluralism then we must be indifferent toward non-religious ideas. [passage omitted giving Taiwan as example; questions and answers on foreign decision-making and Majles decision to allocate fund to counter U.S. anti-Iran measures]

[Correspondent] A number of analysts say Iran's relations with Russia, Japan and the West are strategic. In your view to what extent should these relations expand? Should the relations continue at a cost of compromising over one of our basic principles such as Salman Rushdie and or the court warrant issued in Germany against our country's minister of intelligence. How acceptable do you see the challenges by the Western countries?

[Larijani] We must always evaluate the side that we are dealing with. Those countries are worthy of our long-term friendship where relations with them are based on trust. For this reason the Americans are not worthy of our friendship because there is no trust in their words or action.

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We must take into account today's developments for the purpose of prospects of our ties in the next decade. In my view, within the next few decades we must have a change in our emphasis regarding the volume [Persian: Hojme] of our ties with other countries.

It must be said that it is not necessarily true that if the volume of our relations is high with a number of countries, then they are strategic relations. The strategic nature of relations depends on influence of those relations on our vital interests. Fortunately, none of the European countries have such an influence over our vital interests that we can describe the nature of the relations as strategic.

On principle we must change the main volume of our foreign relations to Asia to the extent that only 30 to 35 percent of the volume of our foreign relations should be devoted to Western Europe. Asia is the best place for our future relations because the interests of our country and the Asian countries are close from the cultural and historical viewpoint.

I think the importance of Europe is gradually fading. The people in the West themselves may have realized this to some extent. The only thing which will remain for the West is rivalry. It means that they should make their ties friendly with other countries in order to enable our ties with them to be long-lasting.

I think the Europeans are harming their interests with their measures and coyness [naz]. We know where to find our interests.

[Correspondent] On the eve of the Sharm al-Shaykh conference, Turkey resorted to some measures against Iran. In your view what will be the effect of Turkey's measures or similar measures by any other country on general relations in the region?

[Larijani] On Turkey, I must say that the country is in a deep crisis. For many years it tried to be part of Western Europe and for this reason it tried to expand secularism through violence. The Europeans systematically rejected Turkey. Their reason is racism. That is, the Europeans do not accept Turkey because of its race. Turkey feels humiliated after promoting that much secularism. It, however, through its NATO membership, tried to maintain some of its desire to be a European country.

The emergence of Islamic movements in Turkey caused concern among the Americans. The Turkish rulers intended to find something to please the Americans. The reason was that the Americans put intense pressures on Turkey and questioned the Turkish programs, asking why, after promoting so much non-religious ideas, they created an Islamist party, Refah [the Welfare Party].

What Turkey is now doing is to become close to Israel. It thinks through this it will be able to attract the attention of the Americans. I think this too will not bear any fruit.

The arrival of Israelis in Turkey is a great mistake and a dangerous move. It will not necessarily increase Turkey's attractiveness to the United States and will not quiet the Islamic movement for fear of Jews. The Israelis are a very dangerous force and will sacrifice all Turkish interests for their sake. They are also considered as a threat to other neighboring countries, including us. I hope this wrong policy will soon come to end and become unsuccessful. [passage omitted]

Pakistan

Pakistan: Iranian Ambassador Views Need for Afghan Settlement

BK2404143696 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 24 Apr 96 pp 1, 5

[Report by Aroosa Alam]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, April 23 Despite Iran's serious reservations over the indulgence of Taleban in drug-smuggling and fanaticism in the interpretation of Islamic teachings, Tehran acknowledges it as a political force in Afghanistan and has invited Taleban to participate in the ongoing multilateral talks to establish lasting peace in Afghanistan.

This was stated by the Iranian Ambassador Mehdi Akhondzadeh in Islamabad during his monthly briefing to the newsmen Tuesday [23 April] afternoon. Ambassador Mehdi Akhondzadeh said that Iran on the basis of substantial reports from Iranian intelligence sources as well as from some independent reports, has strong reasons to believe that Taleban are indulging in drug-trafficking as an easy way to generate revenues. Moreover, he said, Taleban's rigid and fanatic tendencies towards the interpretation of Islam are extremely dangerous to the neighbouring countries such as Pakistan and Iran. He said that Iran views with great concern some of the policies of Taleban which include depriving the female population of Afghanistan of their right to education. "We feel that the ultimate spill over of these fanatic policies would be on Iran's social and economical health", he said adding that social injustice in Afghanistan will cause a big influx of refugees into Iran.

Nevertheless, he said, despite our reservations, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister during his efforts to narrow down the differences between the various Afghan groups had extended invitation of talks to Taleban just to clarify that Iran has no favourites in Afghanistan.

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Dropping strong hints that Tehran has finally been able to sort out difference of perceptions with Islamabad on Afghan interim set up Ambassador Mehdi said that as a result of high-level contacts between Tehran and Islamabad, we hope to hear a good news in near future. He, however, did not elaborate the current status of Pak-Iran talks over the interim mechanism in Afghanistan.

The Iranian Ambassador strongly negated the impression that it was President Rabbani who didn't want to come over the conference table to discuss a peace formula for Afghanistan. He said as a legitimate government, it was President Rabbani's duty to maintain law and order in Afghanistan therefore it does not go in his favour to refuse the intra-Afghan talks to end the civil war in the country.

He said Iran and Pakistan are working closely to hold an intra-Afghan talks so that all the Afghan factions could sit together to determine their destiny. He said the current situation of Afghanistan is very dangerous for the region and particularly for the countries like Iran and Pakistan who have always paid price for the instability in Afghanistan. Therefore, he said that only those countries which are situated in the region and are adversely affected by the Afghan civil war could play a role to bring peace. He was obviously criticising the role of Western countries particularly the recent visits by American officials to the region. He said that those who are living outside the region cannot help for the re-establishment of peace in Afghanistan.

He said even the UN has a very limited role and that too is to provide humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people. The ambassador said that there is complete harmony and convergence of views between Iran and Pakistan over the Afghan issue He said both the countries are working to establish a broad based government representing all groups in Afghanistan. He said in the beginning Iran did believe that Taleban was a new and strange phenomenon but things are transparent now and it is none of Tehran's concern who ultimately rules Afghanistan. Its only concern is that no trouble emanates from Afghanistan against Iran and for that matter against Islamabad also. He said it is a matter of historical record that Soviet Union joined hands with Iraq during Iran-Iraq war only because Iran supported Afghanistan against Soviet invasion. He said as neighbours of Afghanistan we seek friendly relations with any mechanism that develops there to pave way for peace.

The Iranian Ambassador said that renewed US interest in the region is due to dramatic geo-political changes taking place in this region. The USA thinks that it has become irrelevant to the people of the region to post-cold war era and therefore it was necessary for it to make some fresh inroads in some Afghan factions.

On the question of Kashmir the Iranian Ambassador adopted an extremely ambiguous position which was quite surprising as Iran had all along adopted a very clear cut position that Kashmir dispute be solved under the UN Resolution calling for the right of self-determination .

While admitting that elections cannot substitute the plebiscite, Mr. Mehdi said if the will of Kashmiri people is to have elections in the Valley, then Iran will respect that will. He said Kashmir has always been an important issue for Iran and his country is morally committed to the just cause of people of Kashmir. He said we condemn any violent act against Kashmiris but ultimately it should be the will of people to prevail on the question of right to self-determination or the elections.

Outlining the enhanced bilateral relations between Iran and Pakistan, the Iranian Ambassador said that the two countries are expanding trade and investment both within and outside the ECO [Economic Cooperation Organization] he said Iran has recently expressed its readiness to give transit facilities to Pakistan for carrying out trade with Azerbaijan. He said three countries will soon sign a trilateral agreement for transit trade facilities.

Terming the arrival of Iranian Air Chief to Pakistan as a very significant development in Pak-Iran relations the Iranian Ambassador said that people on both sides would seek further expansion of defense cooperation which has been going on for several years. He said Iranian Air Force has emerged as one of the most modern and competent force equipped with most modern fighter MiG-29 and other aircraft with conventional weaponry.

He said Iran admires with a lot of satisfaction the bold stand taken by Prime Minister Bhutto in Bahrain over the question of Israeli aggression on Lebanon. He said Iran feels that Israeli aggression against defenseless people of Lebanon is part of their internal politics. He said it is sad to note that diplomatic activity to stop the bloodshed in Lebanon is not upto the expectations of the people who are constantly being killed in the Israeli attacks. He said Iran on its part is making all out efforts to stop the aggression and his country has demanded that an emergency session of OIC [Organization of Islamic Conference] Foreign Ministers be called to discuss the issue. He said Iran condemns terrorism whatever the cause may be. He said Tehran has always advocated for a just formula for Middle East peace process.

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Pakistan: Foreign Minister Urges 'Big Powers' To Join Afghan Peace Talks

BK2504055996 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0300 GMT 25 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The foreign minister Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali has said regional and big powers should be taken along to ensure a durable settlement in Afghanistan. Talking to newsmen in Islamabad yesterday, he categorically stated that Pakistan has no favorite in Afghanistan. The foreign minister said hectic efforts are going on for a breakthrough. In this connection, he referred to the active roll of Pakistan, Iran and the United States in recent days. He supported the role of the UN mission and said we believe that the UN is the best forum to bring peace to Afghanistan.

About Kashmir, he said the farce elections in the held territory will neither be acceptable to the local people nor to Pakistan and the rest of the world who believe in the UN Charter.

Pakistan: Minister Says Foreign Reserves Reach $1.6 Billion

BK2404135396 Islamabad THE NATION in English 24 Apr 96 p 12

[Report by Nasir Iqbal]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad — Refuting the charges of any decline in the foreign exchange reserves, Dr Sher Afgan, the special education minister, Tuesday [23 April] told the Senate that these have swelled to US $1.6 billion.

Responding to an adjournment motion tabled by former finance minister Sartaj Aziz, Dr Sher Afgan said that in fact the foreign exchange reserves situation was improved during the PPP [Pakistan People's Party] government which were dipped to US $ 300 million when the PML(N) [Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz] government has left. Aziz rejected it by claiming that in fact it was at US $ 815 million and not 300.

Chairman Senate Wasim Saijad, however, asked the member to bring the issue under a motion as this issue does not qualify for an adjournment. Sartaj Aziz also demanded a debate to discuss the foreign exchange reserves situation.

Aziz also asked the minister to compare the export growth during the PML government if he really wants to have a comparative study.

Aziz alleged that foreign exchange reserves considered to be the most important indicator reflecting the economic health of the country have touched the lowest ebb at US $ 810 million which was at US $ 2 billion in the successive years.

Aziz alleged that despite 11 per cent devaluation in the rupee no significant increase has been noticed in the exports rather it only. increased to 5 per cent while the imports figures upsurge to 18 to 19 per cent on yearly basis.

He accused the government for resorting to a short term borrowing of US $ 600 million to improve the foreign exchange reserves only to satisfy the Pakistan Aid to Consortium meeting in Paris. The window dressing is not a permanent solution rather it would lead the country to disaster, he feared.

This year's budget deficit is at Rs [rupees] 2.8 billion that reflects a wide gap between imports and exports, while liabilities have swelled to Rs US$ 8 million, he added.

Dr Sher Afgan in his reply said Senator Aziz very conveniently forgot to mention our foreign reserves outside the country.

He said during 1996, the reserves increased from US $1.5 billion in January this year to US $ 1.3 billion, US $ 1.7 billion and US $ 1.6 billion in February, March and April respectively.

While in the preceding year it was at US $ 2.6 billion, US $ 2. 7 billion, US $ 2.6 billion and US $ 2.9 billion in January, February, March and April 1995. In December 1995 it was at US $ 1.8 billion.

Responding to a question by Syed Fazal Agha; during question hour, Dr Sher Afgan told the Senate that there are 169 Pakistanis undergoing varying terms of imprisonment in Indian jails.

Pakistan: Khber Agency Drug Shops in Jamrud 'Bulldozed'

BK2404144996 Karachi DAWN in English 24 Apr 96 p 1

[Report from DAWN correspondent]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Peshawar, April 23 — The political administration of the Khyber Agency carried out an operation in Wazir Dand area of Jamrud which was famous for drug business and bulldozed 17 shops and arrested 21 drug sellers on Tuesday [23 April] evening. The action was taken in pursuance of a decision taken at a high level meeting held under the chairmanship of Prime Minister [PM] in Islamabad a couple of months ago. The PM had asked the concerned law enforcement agencies and the Anti Narcotics Force to go ahead with the operation.

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The Tuesday's action was a partial exercise as the drug business continued only few yards away in at least a dozen shops while the operation was being conducted in the presence of political authorities and senior officials of Anti Narcotics Task Force (ANTF), NWFP [North-West Frontier Province].

The assistant political agent of Jamrud Mr Amiruddin while briefing the journalists said that the operation was the result of an agreement reached between the tribal elders of the area and the administration a few months ago which calls for demolishing of any property which is in the use of drug sellers.

The agreement also provides that the owner of such property would also pay a fine of Rs [rupees] 50000 per shopping center besides facing legal action under the Frontier Crimes Regulations. To a question he said, "we admit that such operations have been carried out in the past which could not yield any positive results but in future drug business in the area would be strictly dealt with and nobody would be allowed to establish it again".

However, he was unable to justify the presence of a dozen of similar shops where heroin, charas, opium and liquor were being sold only few yards from the operation area.

He disclosed that the arrested criminals were under interrogation and hoped that in the light of their information the law enforcement agencies would be able to catch the big fish involved in the drug business.

The director-general of ANTF Brig Ali Akbar told journalists that such actions inside the tribal territory would help a lot in discouraging the drug business gradually.

About the Tuesday's action Brig Ali Akbar said that it would only help to cut the supply of drug addicts at a small scale and added that the major task of netting the heroin manufacturers and big smugglers still remains unaccomplished.

He revealed that there are 15 heroin factories still operating in the inaccessible areas of the Khyber Agency.

He informed that the government has established a 30 bedded rehabilitation center for the drug addicts in university town.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka: LTTE Dispatch Reports Clashes, Situation in North

BK2304143596 (Internet) Tamil Eelam News WWW in Tamil 20 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The military operation launched yesterday by the Sri Lankan troops has already caused numerous casualties. The Chandrika Kumaratunga government troops, who are resorting to furious bombings and missile attacks from helicopters, have unleashed a reign of terror in the localities where multitudes of people have gathered.

The Sri Lankan troops have been making an attempt to advance from Velikamam toward Thenmarachchi. Thenmarachchi is being rocked by aerial bombings and missile attacks. Hundreds of thousands of people have started leaving their localities. Ten civilians have been killed and 30 injured in the missile attacks launched on the civilian population in Thenmarachchi.

A Mi-24 type helicopter gunship belonging to the Sri Lankan Air Force has carried out a very fierce attack in the Kilali area to prevent people from going to Wanni via Kilali. This reign of terror was unleashed at a place crowded by people on the banks of the Kilali lagoon [Kilalikkarayil]. According to delayed reports, a number of civilians were killed and several others seriously injured in this attack. Members belonging to a single family also fell victim to this state terrorism. This attack was launched on the people assembled at Kilali who were waiting to go to Wanni to escape the state terrorism.

There was a fierce confrontation between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE] and the government troops, when the troops tried to advance toward Mattuvil from Puthur early yesterday morning. The confrontation, lasting several hours, continued until last night. The attempted advance by the troops was thwarted. There are no further reports on the clash. The plan of the Sri Lankan Government troops is to besiege the people through Operation Riviresa-2 to overcome the setback of capturing only deserted land with their previous Operation Riviresa. Therefore, Chandrika Kumaratunga's troops have resorted to barbaric attacks on people to prevent them from going to Wanni. Indiscriminate missile attacks are being carried out on the civilian population from Palali and Elephant Pass.

A helicopter is reported to have been frequently landing and taking off in the area between Elephant Pass and Kattaikadu at dawn yesterday. Following the Sri Lankan Government's military action, all the doctors and nurses working at Chavakachcheri hospital have left

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that locality. Even patients have left the place, as fierce missile attacks have been directed toward the hospital as well.

Citing local sources, Voice of America reports that about 2,000 families are leaving their towns and villages. The report also states that from Jaffna these people are emigrating to Kilinochchi District, which is under the control of the LTTE.

The Tigers' aspiration: the motherland of Tamil Eelam! Thanks.

Sri Lanka: Tamil Rebels Say Military Attacking Civilians

BK2504025596 (Internet) Tamil Eelam News WWW in English 23 Apr 96

["Press Release" Issued by LTTE Headquarters in London on 22 Apr — received via internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Sri Lankan armed forces have now turned on the fleeing Tamil civilians and have started to viciously attack the several thousands of Tamil civilians who have collected on the shores of the Jaffna lagoon at Kilaly waiting to take their boats to freedom in Vanni the Tamil mainland.

The Sri Lankan Government's and the Sri Lankan armed force's strategy is to trap as many as possible of the fleeing Tamil civilians and to retain them by force within the Sri Lankan military occupied areas in the Jaffna peninsula. Armed with this strategy the army is directing its artillery shells on the fleeing Tamil civilians who have choked all the roads to Kilaly, walking sadly in their thousands carrying with them what ever their little possessions they had.

One of the axis of the Sri Lankan armed forces have now advanced to Kachchai in Thenmaratchi close to the Kilaly embarkation point in the Jaffna lagoon in a bid to cut off the fleeing civilians. The armed forces stationed at Kachchai are opening fire on embarkation points and firing at the boats carrying Tamil civilians across the lagoon to Vanni.

Sri Lankan war planes also dropped many bombs on Kachchai area close to Kilaly where the fleeing civilians have concentrated in their thousands waiting to catch a boat across Jaffna lagoon to the safety of Vanni Tamil mainland. The Sri Lankan Mi-24 helicopter gunships have also joined in this crime against humanity. The Helicopter gunships have repeatedly fired rockets on Tamil civilians waiting at Kilaly.

Even though several civilians have been killed and several more have been injured, so far it has been possible to collect records and maintain details on only 30 Tamil civilians killed and at least 50 badly injured because the whole area is under Sri Lankan military attack. The details of 4 civilians who were killed in the Sri Lankan army artillery shelling on 20th April 1996, has just been received and is given at the end of this report.

Dead bodies are lying on the roads. In this pandemonium nobody has the time or the means to bury the dead. Every body is in a frantic hurry to escape the genocidal slaughter unleashed by the advancing Sri Lankan armed forces. Injured people are also not being attended to and are in a terrible situation. No hospitals or medical institutions are functioning as doctors and nurses have deserted their hospitals and have joined the crowds on the run becoming part of the massive movement of people who are fleeing to Vanni.

Civilians killed in Sri Lankan army artillery shelling on 20th April 1996:

Name		Age	Place
Ratheesvaran	Male	23	Kaithady
V Kamal	Male	20	Kachchai
Maria Robert	Female	20	Pulopalai
A. Rasamany	Female	55	Kodikama

Sri Lanka: Troops Maintain Pressure on LTTE in New Offensive

BK2404125096 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 24 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Thousands of displaced Tamil civilians are pouring back to their homes in the Jaffna Peninsula. Meanwhile, troops of Operation Riviresa 2 kept up pressure on the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] for the fifth day yesterday. The LTTE admitted to suffering setbacks at the hands of the advancing Army. The Operational Headquarters of the Ministry of Defense says that over 200,000 civilians have been liberated by the security forces. More than 1,000 families have been given clearance so far to return to Velikamam division. Police personnel are (?screening) thousands of people who want to return to their homes in the area.

Air Force fighter planes attacked LTTE bases in Mullaitivu and Point Pedro area. An LTTE base north of Mullaitivu was completely destroyed. The Air Force also destroyed eight boats carrying terrorists and have been killed by ground troops. [sentence as heard]

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Terrorists disguised as civilians are attempting to infiltrate Army-held territory. The security forces have been able to arrest several of them with assistance from the local population.

Dry rations, medicine, and other essential items are being distributed among the people by civilian authorities with help from the Army.

Two soldiers were killed and 13 others wounded so far in the operation.

Meanwhile, terrorists attacked STF [Special Task Force] troops who were on a search operation at Pannalagama in the Amparai District last morning. The STF retaliated effectively, forcing the LTTE to flee. One inspector and a sergeant were killed in action while seven STF personnel sustained injuries. Ground troops confirmed that six terrorists were killed in the confrontation.

Sri Lanka: Minister Briefs on Offensive Against Tamil Rebels

BK2504025096 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 25 Apr 96

[Received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Less than 50 percent of the land area of Thenmarachchi and Vadamarachchi divisions in the Jaffna peninsula remain to be cleared by the security forces, Acting Defence Minister General Anuruddha Ratwatte said on Wednesday [24 April]. Valikamam, the other division, was cleared by Operation Riviresa I last year.

"Operation Riviresa Two will continue. Our objective is to facilitate the return of all the people who were forced to leave their homes in Valikamam by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam," [LTTE] General Ratwatte told the media at a special news briefing.

The minister said the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) estimates put the number of civilians queuing up to return to Valikamam at 250,000, with around 50,000 still undecided mostly due to the involvement of certain family members in the LTTE. "They are reluctant to come fearing they will be penalised".

He said the sight of lakhs of people marching towards Valikamam with all their belongings on roads opened up by the security forces was "simply incredible". He declined to name the roads.

"They really seem to be liberated. They are smiling, singing and shouting. There is a change of attitude in the people".

He said the operation had to be conducted in "absolute secrecy" and with the imposition of certain restrictions on the media to fully realise its objectives.

"Our prime concern was to safeguard the lives of civilians. We are happy that we could open avenues for the return of civilians without casualties. Our security forces have earned the respect and goodwill of the civilians".

The minister, who toured Jaffna and Chavakachcheri on Tuesday, quoted civilians as saying they are "fed up with the LTTE" and are no longer willing to be under their control.

The LTTE's attempts at holding back the civilians, including shooting into the air, have not had the desired effect and unconfirmed reports said at least six LTTE cadres have been beaten to death by a group of enraged civilians. They had also destroyed the LTTE office in Chavakachcheri.

He told journalists that three transit camps have been opened to facilitate the influx of displaced people to Valikamam. Foods and housing materials are provided. Post office and bank facilities are available in Jaffna. A CWE store is also open for the convenience of people.

Sufficient food stocks are being sent to the North, he said. In addition to the stocks already available in Jaffna, the ships Lanka Muditha and Komari will supply new consignments.

More than 100 Tigers have died during the security forces' advance. Troops lost only two men.

"The close-quarter fighting was mainly during the first two days, with the Tigers caught by surprise. But now they are not fighting any more. Their cadres are depleted, supplies are low and so is morale".

He did not discount the possibility of retaliatory attacks by the LTTE on targets in other areas of the country, but assured that "every step will be taken to prevent such incidents".

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